MEDIASCENE

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THIS ISSUE
FANTASY
FILM
FORECAST
COMICS/TV/FILMS

DRAWING FOR COMICS PART TWO/CONAN/JUSTICE LEAGUE
FLASH GORDON CONQUERS TV/THE RATHOLE ON PARK AVENUE

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A SUPERGRAPHICS PUBLICATION

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issue 32
july-august 1978
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MEDIASCENE is a bi-monthly publication devoted to popular culture in multimedia, from the comics to the cinema.

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MEDIASCENE

Publishing a magazine is a lot like going to war.

I tell you this because it's something you'd never know about unless you've actually done it yourself. Most of you won't, but even if you do, it probably won't be on the same scale as **MEDIASCENE**.

When the word "publisher" is mentioned, it tends to conjure up visions of wealth, power and fame (which may very well be true in a few isolated instances), but from my point of view, it is a series of skirmishes with writers, artists, editors, publicity people, type compositors, photographers, paper supply houses, printers and, of course, the omnipresent postal authorities.

Put them all together they spell W-A-R.

Now, I believe that a little war can be good for you; it tempers the soul. But the kind of war I'm talking about is the war of the full-time publisher, a 24-hour-a-day war, one that continues on, relentlessly, weekdays, weeknights, Saturdays, Sundays and holidays—which is exactly what it takes to produce a small, but specialized magazine such as this one.

It's the kind of war that, at times, can be less than pleasant.

It can also be rewarding, personally rewarding. I know I can bank a much bigger paycheck by painting than I can by publishing, and probably gain a greater reputation, too. Yet drawing, painting or writing utilize only those aspects of the talent, knowledge and skill I am able to offer. Publishing **MEDIASCENE** engages just about everything—including a few things I never even knew I had.

Perhaps I can best illustrate the point by explaining how a publication like this is produced.

Generally, it begins with an idea. And the idea comes after a careful, judicious look at what interests the American public at the moment. Exploitive? I suppose so, but **MEDIASCENE**'s focus is one of popular entertainment in the media, which explores the exciting journalistic possibilities of features such as, "How To Turn Your '47 DeSoto Station Wagon Into a Skateboard," or "Is Wildebeast Horn The New Cure For Stuttering?"

Besides being topical, the idea to be selected must fall within the editorial framework of the magazine. It must be imaginative, interesting and graphic—and that leaves quite a range from which to choose. More specifically, last year sword and sorcery material was hot. This year it's science fiction. Next year—well, whatever it is we'll have it in the liveliest and most entertaining fashion possible.

If you follow trends as closely as we do, you've probably noticed a handful of other magazines using features and photos that appeared in **MEDIASCENE** months earlier. Most publications, both pro and fan, on the market today deal with material that is commonly available everywhere. This magazine on the other hand makes every attempt to deliver its stories *before* the event—sometimes even years before.

Look over the back issues of **MEDIASCENE**. It was the first magazine in the country to feature Star Wars, Close Encounters, Superman, Galactica, Towering Inferno and a host of others—exclusively and far ahead of any other magazine.

This kind of exclusivity is predicated on a myriad of contacts throughout the film, tv and publishing industries—and a solid track record with both the people who make the news and those who want to know it, our readers. Believe me when I say it's not easy to produce exclusive features issue after issue, or to top yourself on a long run basis. We've done it. We're proud of it. It's been a success. It works.

After the basic theme for the issue has been selected, the breakdown of individual articles is considered. I accept or reject each possibility on the qualities previously mentioned, shaping a handful of entities into a structured unit. Assignments are delegated to our correspondents, unless all the material required is directly in our hands, at which point it is written by one or several of the staff. As the assignments are completed, they are polished editorially to further conform with the issue's format and content.

At this point, the material is organized graphically, which is one of my most important contributions to the publication. It has always been my contention that, although **MEDIASCENE** does not have the production budget or the technical facilities of the slick mainstream magazines, it can nevertheless deliver the kind of immediacy and excitement those books have never offered.

I believe I am able to accomplish this through the size and nature of the tabloid format, by combining those aspects with innovative and experimental design and imaginative typography. I am responsible for the placement of every letter, number, word, title, line, photo and illustration that appears in each issue—and there are quite a few of those that appear in each issue. **MEDIASCENE** is, of course, the equivalent of a regular 72-page magazine in content.

As somewhat of an authority on the art of lettering, I give special consideration to titles and headlines, often creating original alphabets to augment and amplify the subject matter.

Simultaneously, along with the layout and typography of the features, their positions in the magazine are arranged. Producing a lively and pleasing pacing is a special knack in itself. Headaches really begin when last minute substitutions are made. Should really topical material turn up, even after the entire issue has been "put to bed," it is not uncommon to tear the contents down and start from scratch. This kind of juggling act is expensive, not to mention hard on the nerves.

Actual paste-up production of the magazine is done primarily in the week preceeding printing, and, as the deadline draws closer, the time involved gets proportionally longer. I am told that an 82-hour day was put in on issue 28, mercifully, I can only recall several 70-hour stretches. Production is extremely demanding and precise, capably handled by Ken Bruzenak with an assist by Pauline Bigornia. There have been times when material has been so late getting to us (Marvel and DC covers for example), that it has to be pasted-up *on the floor of the truck* as we go to the printers. Occasionally there has been as much as a half hour for proofreading and doublechecking. Believe me, the details can be staggering—especially in color work.

Speaking of trucks, they are important war machines in the publishing business. Ours are rented, and generally have no fancy rattles, it is feared they will vibrate apart on the road. In the winter, their doors won't close; in the summer, they refuse to open. You have no idea what it's like to stay up for three days, drive an hour and a half to the printer, strip negatives, burn plates, run the magazine, load it into the truck, drive back to the offices, unload four tons of paper by hand—then discover the truck doors *refuse to open!*

During one unloading operation, about three in the morning, we were stopped by a police convoy, weapons drawn, for what apparently looked like a burglary. They finally left after we convinced them no crooks in their right minds would *steal four tons* of **MEDIASCENE**.

I've been in many predicaments, but the most perilous one occured two years ago, in January, during the winter's severest snowstorm (Easterners, remember the Blizzard of '78?). It happened just off the Pennsylvania Turnpike, on a deserted stretch of blacktop. The gas gage read *full*, but the tank was *empty*. The heater was broken, too, the temperature was drifting toward zero, and it was two in the morning. Several hours went by before a passerby stopped and drove me into the city. I kept from freezing by wrapping **MEDIASCENE**s around my arms, legs and body under my clothes for insulation. It's not every publisher that can say his *life* was saved by his magazine.

It goes to prove it's not quite as easy as it looks, yet through it all, I still consider the 32 issues of **MEDIASCENE** to be among my finest accomplishments.

Your response has made it a fulfilling one, too.

STERANKO

SPECIAL SALE! EVERY ITEM IN THIS ISSUE AT 20% DISCOUNT-SEE PAGE 35

MEDIASCENE BACK ISSUES FOR SALE!

No. 1 — Proof packed premiere issue on DOC SAVAGE. Illustrated reviews of Doc by Mike Ploog, Gene Colan, Don Adkins, Marie Severin and Overstreet. Big Doc Savage art sale spotlights the Wave of Bronze Talent and reviews, covered all by page, and comic reproductions. Full-page Shelton preservation piece by Richards.

No. 2 — Special CAPTAIN MARVEL issue, featuring the only behind Bell's reunion with the Big Red Cheese. Illustrated with shots of artists and writers from the 40's and the 70's. Bell's Big Red Marvel memoirs, along with articles on the Fawcett policy, Wayne underground comic, and an affidavit and inspiring endorsement by Parasite.

No. 3 — Haunting HORROR COMICS issue. Type 11 to the Marvel type and advice to the undergrounds, all discussed and dissected in a definitive style, illustrated with dozens of vintage horror comic covers. "Frogs," the weirdest, insensitive graphic story in Horrorbe, covered in the underground. Painted features on Horror Films.

No. 4 — BRUCE AND HIS TOWERS is the theme of the coastal issue that examines the role of comics and drug usage. The controversial B. page exploitary years "The Black," by Bradley highlights this issue, along with the story behind its creation. Plus more news, articles, features, and behind the scenes material by Steranko.

No. 5 — Issue SAGES AND ICE (ish) issue. Hard Hydra issue has burning issue, articles and art. Hard Indian pastiche illustrations to Hydra, go to Horror Trash, Go Hard, Kirby, Ditmarks and others. Definitive articles on Conan and Howard. The Evolution of Sex and Barbarians in the Comics and more on the Fantasy Art.

No. 6 — Big BURROUGHS issue, full of action-packed facts and graphics to satisfy an Earthling of the Edgar Rice Burroughs variety. Along with great color cover painting of Barsoomian John Carter's long and fantastic career is crammed with rare pulp Martian Tales. Comic scene, paperback reviews, films, records and media fill out the package.

No. 7 — Colorful CRIME AND VIOLENCE issue, from Public Enemy to Magazine Terror, featuring Dargaud cover and extravagant coverage. Interview with Executioner author Don Pendleton, writing for crime thrillers by Max Allan and Chet Garwood prolific Hyperbad book is Sci-fi and media to go with this change to Mediascene.

No. 8 — Pin-Up PIN-UP issue, packed with a special graphic history of pin-up art from cavemen to cosmos & Starwoks tribute to Marilyn Monroe graces the centerspread, along with pin-ups from the most famous artists. Brief and media news are heavily illustrated with exciting graphics in a nine-page format.

No. 9 — Amazing ARTHERO issue, featuring a photo-packed layout on the History of Doc Savage, Wildcats with Sandra dramatic tales Reserves, Pulpmags map of Tarzan's Africa, Horrorbe centerspread of his best-known hero, Fiction Comic Film, TV and paperback novel cover Conan, Flash Gordon strips 10 and the heroic issue.

No. 10 — HORROR FICTION spectacular illustrated by Williamson, Wood, Krenkel, Severin, more. Great double-size packed with art and graphics, fantastic Adkins Gallery that accompanied in color. It's 11 covers revisited. Flavor of the Ages. 12 on 12. The Count in illustrations, Incredible Pulps, comics, films & science fiction!

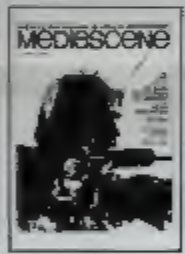
No. 11 Gold ADVENTURE issue features Hollywood's monster films, the details of the Pulp Heroes Display, Savage, Sanders Pictorial Fields on Charles Bronson, Planet Police, Behind the Scenes of the Personal Computer. Also, large 20-page Marvel expanded news section, Para classic color with super-sized Sword and Sorcery centerspread.

No. 12 — Big Pulp issue, Journal Pioneer of Godfather II, Edgar Rice Burroughs Mars, Agatha Christie and her Film Master On The Orient Express, new movie era of Harry Bruce, The Conquest in Film and fiction, galactic motor-torrent comics, art covers. Also

No. 13 — SF ACTION issue, packed with photo coverage of The Great World Powers, Prophets of the Paradise, and The Legend of Billy Jack. Special features on The Rebirth of Warlock, Chinese with heroic contemporary people in color. Photo focus on two new flicks, plus comic news, paperbacks, more media news, TV, fantasy, adventure.

No. 14 — Powerful HERO PULP issue, featuring the most massive heroes in history. The Legends Behind The Shadow written by his creator, Walter Gibson. Spectacular color-filled monograph introducing you the heroes and villains you adore, in-depth features on the Origins of Pulp Heroes. Premiere of Tarzan, Edgar Rice Burroughs, more.

No. 15—Underground COMICS issue. Vaughn Bode—Sterling left portrait in comics and politics, his new style. Rare comic, a pornography book on Barry Smith illustrated with a great color centerspread, special feature on Jack Kirby's return to Marvel with exclusive Mediascene preview of Cap America. The Art of Neal Adams with a full-page Tarzan.



No. 16—Special ARTISTS issue. The full story behind the Gil Kane, Buck and Ployog graphic novels. Master of the Mountain, Metal Knights, reveals his influences and motivations in a rapidly expanding field. Frank Thorne on Ka-Zar, Adkins on Doc Savage, plus feature on Boyd Black on current comics on comics market.

No. 17 — Dynamite ART issue, featuring The Hero Maze, a look at the flying heights of PART in comics, color and line, with a color Biomedia Spectacular. Edgar Rice Burroughs centennial portraits by Frank Frazetta, the Case Against Superman by Jerry Siegel owners of Legion's Rest comics, films, more.

No. 18 — Psychotic PULP issue highlighting The Ka Resse Pulps with cover reproductions: More I Read The Shadow by Steranko Illustrated with Previously published art. Behind The Mask, origins of the great Pulp heroes: The Shadow of the Cobras, Introducing Cherokee, an exciting, new visual novel more.

No. 19—The SCREEN AVENGERS 1940 pulp era an exciting look and info filled 16-page issue on the serials and shades of the Saturday afternoon series including The Spider, Flash Gordon, The Shadow, Captain America, The Phantom, Ace Hammond, scores of others. Comics, Dick Tracy centerspread.

No. 20—BRIGHT AND BORGHT SPECTACULAR with a Neal Adams color cover 6 & 5 in the Graves. Gradual Green by Robert E. Howard, Jack Kirby First Fingers with Mainland map, Wood's Wizard King, Tolkien, the Wizards of Middle Earth, hallucinogenic experiences of Sinbads, comics, Marie Severin

No. 21—A FILM ANIMATION SPECIAL featuring the history of the fantasy film, Hollywood and Disney to the present. Bob Clampett, Jean Cocteau, Ray Harryhausen, Chuck Jones cover, making salads in Warner Bros. Disney animation scenes, more!

No. 22 — Sensational STAR WARS spectacular packed with never before seen production paintings, storyboard art and a color screen commercial inside. Marvel's Star Wars comic, Showmen of the Cinema, King Kong issue art, Basil Gogos's Wizards, pull-out film preview comics, films and media news.

No. 23 — The SUPER WOMEN, from Charlie's Angels to Wonder Woman, an exclusive interview with Wonder's Lynda Carter, Wonder and Galaxy, Phillip Druker color centerspread, the future of the Bionic Jaimeng, original art, why and how the Super Schools reviewed comics, media and more.

No. 24 — Period FANTASY, with more sword and sorcery in the classic and the new Conan films, an exclusive interview with Conan, a text and photo film more people. The Silver Surfer inspired silver invasion, Alcala's new SEA Hawk, Victor, Jubilee centerspread, an ever-growing Red Sonja photo feature.

No. 25—DUCKS, from Donald to Howard, and a legion of funny animal heroines. Carl Barks and his Uncle Scrooge are featured, along with the many friends of Frank Frazetta, The Life and Times of Barnyard Duck, the animated film Allegro Non Troppo, plus Some Quack shorts his best off.

No. 26—Sizzling STAR WARS issue, Mind-warp never before released art, wrapped in a new color cover and panoramic centerspread. There are also interviews of the new Superman film, Marvel's TV heroes, The Bad Guys That Never Was, sci-fi film news, comics, heroes and myth, myth, myth.

No. 27—Mystifying MAGIC issue, featuring Simonson's outstanding feature on magic and escapes. Also, features on Rangel the Magician by Milton Caniff, The Magic Comic, the Carson, Siegel and Thompson films, Dan McGregor's Dragonflame with Gordon art, Ray Bradbury's Illustrated Zanoxy.

No. 28—COMICS AND ANIMATE issue, with a special Atlantis feature on Close Encounters of the Third Kind. An interview Mike Kaluta interview with a new color cover. Wally Wood's Wally Wonder, Jack Kirby's Pressman, The Unnamed Enemy, and Bob Clarke's film, more centerspread by Gray Morrow, more.

MEDIASCENE BACK ISSUES ARE IN SHORT SUPPLY - GET YOURS WHILE THEY LAST!

FANTASY FILM FORECAST

Intergalactic wars between hostile planets, with Earth as the ultimate battleground! Strange ape-like men and panthers that stalk on two legs! Shattering wars between civilizations above and below the surface of the seas! Ghostly death ships sailing on the tortured mists of time! Exploratory voyages into the mysterious depths of outer space! Global destruction and the rebirth of civilization in the hands of far-sighted scientists! Fur-clad barbarians in a magnificent epic of sword & sorcery from the forgotten past! Explosive space wars on a galactic scale!

These are just a few of the themes being explored in the months ahead as fantasy and science-fiction become the focal point for film-makers in Hollywood and around the world. First class production standards and multi-million dollar budgets are being lavished on pure, fantastic, escapist adventure as never before.

Currently in release is an eye-popping sci-fi epic from Japan titled **Message From Space**, which has been lip-syncing around the country, but deserves looking into by devotees of special effects gadgetry. Starring Vic Morrow and Sonny Chiba, **Message From Space** has a familiar plot: two alien races are at war, and the doomed defenders of a planetary fortress send for aid by casting eight mystically empowered spaceships into the universe. The rescuing warriors arrive, but as a result, the repulsed invaders declare nuclear war on Earth for revenge. Rallying to the challenge, a great battle is waged on the planet of Jillucia which results in complete destruction for both the invasion force and the planet itself. The film ends on an upbeat note as the Jillucians cast off into space, searching for a new home among the stars.

Whatever the story's merits, it is the special effects which steal every scene in a display of technological ingenuity that some reviewers consider to be much better than **Star Wars**. Exotic space-craft abound, from star-riggers to enormous sun-sailing craft, as well as a host of alien gimmicks and interplanetary monsters. It's samurai space action on a grand scale, with an inventiveness and originality that takes the current hardware approach to science-fiction one step beyond the threshhold of fantasy entertainment.

One of the largest investors in the newly-opened doorway to dreams is Sandy Howard Productions, which has been involved with film projects of varying size, scale and theme, from **A Man Called Horse** to **The Island of Dr. Moreau**. Their single largest film commitment to date is due to be released next spring by American International Pictures. It's an all-star science-fiction/disaster production titled **Meteor**, directed by Ronald (**Poseidon Adventure**) Neame, and the subject of a major photo feature in the next issue of **MEDIASCENE**.

A combination of martial arts and sword & sorcery sets the tone for **The Silent Flute**, the famous unfilmed story originally written by kung-fu star Bruce Lee, James Coburn and Stirling Silliphant. Filming has already been completed under the direction of Richard Moore, from a script by Silliphant.

Newcomer Jeff Cooper has the starring role of Cord, a young martial artist who sets out on a heroic quest for the legendary Book of Wisdom. This is the role Bruce Lee envisioned for himself, calling for a virtuoso display of flashing fists and feet against a cadre of murderous adversaries.

The real star of **The Silent Flute**, however, is David Carradine, who has already made his martial arts mark as the star of TV's **Kung Fu** series. Carradine actually appears in four different parts for the picture, the largest of which is that of Cord's blind mentor, who plays a long bamboo flute that only he and his pupil can hear (hence the film's title which may be changed by release time). The flute is also a deadly weapon when expertly wielded by the sightless teacher. Carradine also portrays a number of heavily disguised and fantastic roles in which he tests young Cord to prepare him for the responsibility of obtaining the Book of Wisdom: Jungor, the Monkey Man, is a bizarre creature with the face of an ape; Chang Sha, the Rhythm Man, conducts wild debaucheries; a feline Panther Man completes the one-man show as an evil personification of Death.

Other stars include Eli Wallach as a strange character confined to a barrel in atonement for his past sins. He is know as The Man-in-Oil, and advances the story by directing Cord to a barbarian caravan, where a beautiful dancing girl enters the drama. Erica Creer plays Tara, the girl whom Cord falls in love with, and immediately loses in a crucifixion designed by Chang Sha as a test of spiritual strength.

Cord's quest for the book eventually brings him to the mysterious high-priest, Zalan, played by Christopher Lee. Expecting a fight, Cord is surprised when Zalan merely hands over the Book of Wisdom. There are no secrets in the volume's pages however, only mirrors reflecting the face of Cord himself.

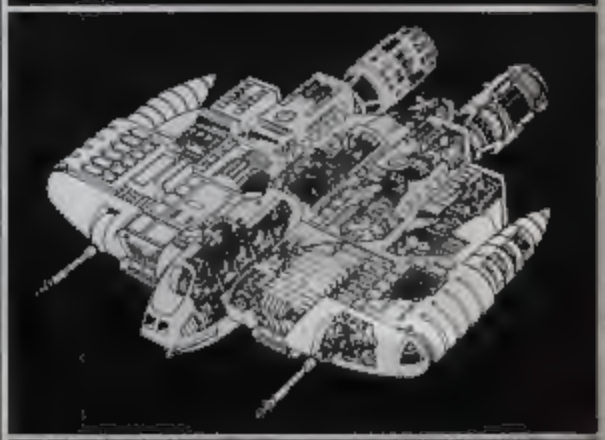
More contemporary fantasy adventure is showcased in **Jaguar Lives!**, a James Bond-style action thriller starring Joe Lewis as Jonathan Cross. Lewis has been dubbed the Muhammud Ali of karate, and is being touted as "a cross between the sensitivity of James Dean, the rage of a young Marlon Brando, and the flamboyance of Errol Flynn."

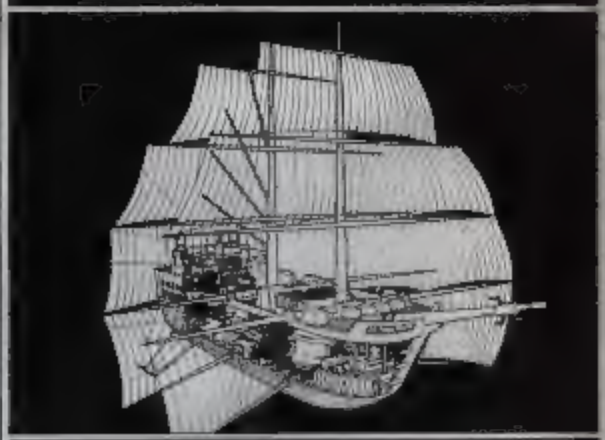
Jaguar is Lewis' code-name in an elite special espionage group known as the Big Cats, whose mission is to combat a deadly United Nations of Evil—an international band of Mafia dons and syndicate chiefs. The screenplay calls upon Lewis natural athletic ability in fights with six kung-fu experts and two giant Sumo wrestlers, not to mention motorcycle chases, car crashes and variety of death duels.

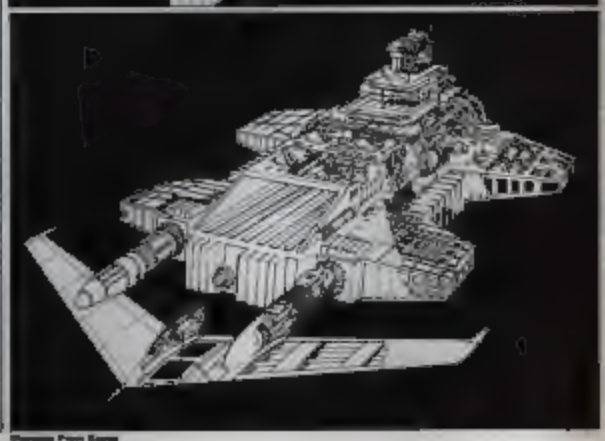
Jaguar Lives! is the first of a series of films featuring the character, and executive producer Sandy Howard has signed Lewis to a four-film agreement, with plans in the works for Jaguar books and merchandising spin-offs. To get this long-term project off the ground, a supporting cast of familiar faces has been recruited, including Christopher Lee, Barbara Bach, Donald Pleasence, Joseph Wiseman, John Huston and Woody Strode.

Adrift and Beyond is a Sandy Howard film set to begin filming in January, and marks the directoral debut of Bill Butler, the cinematographer behind **Jaws**, **Rocky** and **Grease**. It's a drama of eight survivors from a sunken cruise ship, floating aimlessly on a calm sea, surrounded by an impenetrable fog. Out of the darkness, a ship slowly approaches, but does not answer their calls. Upon boarding, the castaways discover that the ship is the *Blood Star*, lost at sea for over 20 years. There are no human survivors on board, but strange forces begin to manifest control over the survivors as they ride the ghost-ship through a raging storm and into the unknown.

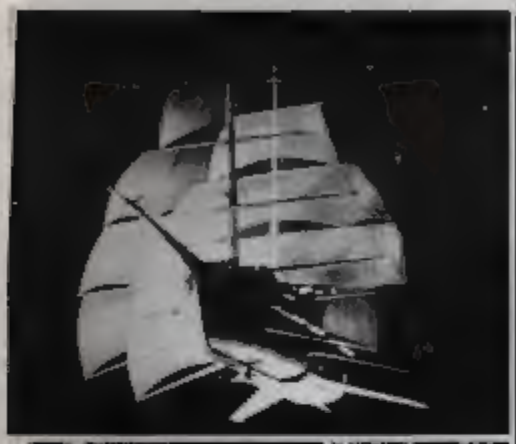
Beginnings is "the first cosmic murder mystery," set to begin filming for Howard Productions in March. The film is being







Message From Space



Copyright © 1976 Edward R. Pressman Productions Inc. Caligula

Copyright © 1976 Sandy Howard Productions Ashanti and Beyond

Ashanti's Daughter

touted as a project which brings both science-fiction and mystery genres a "new way to dial" If the project lives up to the production art (used on this issue's cover), it should be exciting entertainment.

Set at *Genesis*—the ultimate computer project—**Snakestorm** begins to unfold when key personnel are murdered by an unknown assailant in a variety of bizarre ways. *Genesis* is being controlled by the killer, and will soon become fully operational, exploding with energies that will alter the reality of Earth and the planets. "reaching from the farthest star to the innermost depth of the human mind.... to a place where the ultimate mystery of our own private horrors resides."

Odyssea is a $10 million underwater spectacle, set in the year 2080, a time when overpopulation and food shortage have driven millions beneath the waves for survival. They establish a submarine civilization called Oceana, made up of domed cities, fed from underwater fields harvested by frogmen. As the years pass, they lose touch with the surface world—now called Terrestria—and war eventually erupts. The people of Oceana rise from their watery domain to reclaim their homeland, and "amidst the terrors of the unknown, a love story dominated by a woman whose personality rivals Scarlett O'Hara, and a message for each individual to believe in himself, stand up and be counted."

Even as their million dollar mouse celebrates his fiftieth birthday, Walt Disney Studios has decided to take a bold, new step in film-making by producing a awesome $17½ million dollar interstellar adventure movie, **The Black Hole.** Press releases boast that it is "the most ambitious motion picture in Disney Studio history," with a cast that includes Yvette Mimeux, Maximilian Schell, Anthony Perkins, Robert Foster, Joseph Bottoms and Ernest Borgnine. **The Black Hole** is a "straight" film, rather than humorous, and has been in the planning stages for several years already, waiting for a movie like **Star Wars** to provide the necessary impetus to take off.

Filming of **The Black Hole** began October 11, on closed sound stages, under the direction of Gary (**Washington: Behind Closed Doors**) Nelson. The entire premise of the film is to actually enter a black hole of space, and no less than four Academy Award winning special visual effects technicians have been hired to see that the job is done right.

A science-fiction classic is slated for release next spring in a color remake of H.G. Wells' **Shape of Things to Come.** Jack Palance, Carol Lynley and Barry Morse star in this Canadian financed production, budgeted at $3 million, and directed by George MacGowan. The story no longer starts in war-torn London, but the basic themes of destruction and resurrection remain as visually compelling as ever.

The film that started it all, **Star Wars,** is currently waiting to be joined by its direct sequel, **The Empire Strikes Back.** Special effects photography, supervised by Brain (**Spacehunter 1999**) Johnson, director Irvin Kershner and producer/advisor George Lucas, began in October, and principle character filming will start in January, with a final release date planned for Spring 1980.

Buck Rogers backtracks to the big screen

Meanwhile, many of the people who were part of the original **Star Wars** phenomena are preparing a space adventure feature for spring '79 release, titled **Alien.** The plot could have been inspired by a combination of **The Thing** and **Terror Beyond Space,** set on a remote mining satellite, with the menace in the form of a dangerous alien being on the loose. Look for exclusive coverage in the next few issues of **MEDIASCENE.**

Even TV has plunged into the sci-fi scene on an enormous scale—so much so that **Buck Rogers** has been pulled from the NBC line-up, and slated for feature film release. Written and produced by Glen Larson and Leslie Stevens, whose **Battlestar Galactica** is currently flying high in the ratings, **Buck Rogers** boasts special effects by Close Encounters' Doug Trumbull, and an approach slightly more adult than the current "quick, shoot the alien" cliches. Several changes in the original legend have been made—Buck is not gassed in a cave, but frozen while on a deepspace exploration mission. Nevertheless, rather than throw away the entire project on one or two quick TV showings, Larson has decided to let audiences see **Buck Rogers** on the big screen first, where much of **Star Wars'** epic scale worked best, and let the small screen debut wait while. Planned for spring release, **Buck Rogers** is taking advantage of a few months extra time to shoot additional theatrical footage and refine the effects so that they will not suffer from being projected up to 50 times the size they were originally created for.

From England, Time-Life has bought the fantastic TV adventures of **Blake's Seven,** a nine-episode series set in the future, and scheduled for American showing in February '79. **Blake's Seven** refers to a group of highly-trained scientists, each specializing in different fields, gathered together to combat a covert invasion of alien creatures. Robots, ray-guns and gadgets play a prominent part in the series, as do two buoyant and beautiful lady scientists who spark the sci-fi with just a sprinkling of sex-appeal.

Finally, on the other end of the fantasy film ladder, **Conan the Barbarian** is preparing to go before the cameras next spring, with the release date targeted for early 1980. Based on the legendary hero's early days as a thief and mercenary/wanderer, **Conan's** script has been completed by Oliver (**Midnight Express**) Stone, and is being referred to technical advisor L. Sprague DeCamp and story consultants Roy Thomas and Ed Summer for accuracy of details. Summer is also the associate producer of **Conan,** which is an Edward R. Pressman production. The entire project has finally reached the stage where Ron Cobb and Jim Danforth have begun pre-production work (including a series of full-color paintings, one of which is featured on these pages. Rick Baker is being consulted for the make-up chores, and veteran actors such as Christopher Lee and James Mason are being considered for some of the major roles.

Altogether, the fantasy field is booming—past, present and future. In a coming issue, **MEDIASCENE** will go behind the scenes on several of the most important upcoming projects, as well as explore the greatest fantasy epic (that almost) was—**Dune**—along with the people who worked on it, complete with never before seen drawings and production illustrations that must be seen to be believed.

THINK YOU KNOW WHAT EVIL LURKS IN THE HEARTS OF MEN? NOT UNTIL YOU'VE SEEN THIS BOOK!

AVAILABLE NOW

UNSEEN SHADOWS

Unseen Shadows is a book of revelations of the secret life of the pulp era's premiere Master of Darkness, unveiled by Shadow paperback cover painter, Steranko. **Unseen Shadows** is a 64-page collection of 50 extremely tight and detailed pencil renderings which were the preliminary roughs for the finished Shadow paperback cover paintings. Every drawing is reproduced in it's *original size*, and is carefully drawn in varying gray pencil-shaded tones to closely approximate the full range of light, dark and textured values of the final paintings. This is the Shadow that only the artist and the art director usually see, because many changes are made during the actual rendering. Nearly half of these drawings contain designs and concepts which *never appeared on any Shadow paperback cover!* There is an introduction and illustrated explanation of *How I Paint the Shadow* by Steranko, and an Afterword by Walter Gibson. The entire volume is appropriately printed in midnight black, and both covers are 8x10½" reproductions of the two most action-filled and pulp-flavored paintings, in full-color, without type. **Unseen Shadows** is a collector's dream, available in a regular paperbound edition for just $4.00. There is also a *deluxe hardback edition* of **Unseen Shadows**, limited to 325 copies (the exact number of **Shadow** pulps originally published) specially signed by Steranko, for $12.00.

FANDOM'S COMICS

The Comic Crusader Storybook is Marty Greim's magnum opus tribute to the fan art and creativity that spanned over a decade-and-a-half of characters and creations to pay homage to the great Marvel heroes of the 60s. This *brand-new* volume is 168-pages in length, with never-before-published art by Steranko, Adams, Adkins, Ditko, Sutton, Staton, Nahrae and others, illustrating such unforgettable fandom heroes as Dr. Weird, The Eye, The Defender, Googuy, The Eclipse and The Shade. Over three years in the making, **The Comic Crusader Storybook** also features full color covers by Joe Sinnott and Dick Giordano—a truly massive spectacle of organized fan activity, with a cast of hundreds, for $8.50.

FRANK BRUNNER

Alter Image—an impressive new portfolio of illustrations, paintings and never-before-published art by master fantasist Frank Brunner. Packed with 52 pages of barbarians, sorcerers, wild women and unbridled imagination, **Alter Image** also features six pages of full-color paintings which are printed here for the *first time ever*. There's also a wealth of original art, follow of Frank's favorite comic work, an up-to-date checklist of Brunner's accomplishments, and pages of running commentary in which the artist reflects on the success or failure of individual works, all collected underneath attractive and distinctive full-color covers. An impressive portfolio for one of comic's most popular and talented artists, available for just $5.00.

MARVEL INDEXES

These two books are the latest additions to the complete Marvel Comics Index series, both focusing on the heroes from **Tales to Astonish**. **Volume 7A** features every comic, cover and fact dealing with the incredible Hulk. **Book 7B** does the same for the Sub-Mariner's many appearances, and features a cover based on an unpublished Bill Everett layout from the Golden Age. Both feature full-color covers, and are available for just $3.95 each.

BERNI WRIGHTSON

Presenting! A brand-new collection of all-old reprints by the master of the macabre, Berni Wrightson—**Tales You've Seen Before...Back For More**. Now, in a single 64-page, high-quality black and white volume are seven long out-of-print horror, humor and science-fiction stories from the defunct pages of **Web of Horror, Sedition Stories**, and assorted fanzines. Written and drawn by Wrightson, with an introduction by Eric Kimball, **Back For More** is a gold-plated opportunity to acquire these classic comics at a bargain price—just $3.95. Both covers are in full-color, and the front is an *original* painting, so that Wrightson fans will have to buy the book anyway. Diabolically clever isn't it?

SILVER SURFER

The Surfer is back, and we've got him! Now, Marvel's gleaming rider of the star-ways is available in a movie-length epic produced by the team that originally created him! In their first collaboration in years, Stan Lee and Jack Kirby have combined their talents in this titanic 100-page adventure starring the Silver Surfer, the awesome Galactus and a host of fantastic allies and adversaries. Not a reprint book, or a collection of old Surfer tales, this new *full-color* volume is completely original and created especially for this edition. Here is the Surfer at the height of his power—poetic, provocative and supremely powerful. **The Silver Surfer** is $4.95.

TROLLS DRAGONS ELVES OGRES SORCERERS DEMONS MAIDENS WARRIORS AND THE BROTHERS HILDEBRANDT

The Brothers Hildebrandt is a uniquely fascinating and exciting 52-page book of art and interviews with the two most popular and respected Tolkein Calendar painters, Tim and Greg Hildebrandt. It is also an impressive portfolio of over 50 paintings, sketches and detailed drawings, with *10 pages of breathtaking full-color*. Nearly all of the material presented in **The Brothers Hildebrandt** is in the heroic fantasy tradition, along with model photos and pencil layout sketches to illustrate exactly *how* these two masterful painters work, alone and together. Separate interviews with the two artists give insight to their collaborative efforts. **The Brothers Hildebrandt** is a collector's volume, published to commemorate a special convention exhibition of their work, held in July 1978. Limited to 7500 copies, **The Brothers Hildebrandt** *will not be reprinted*, so order your copy today, for just $6.00.

Out of the night, alone against the storm, seeking to unravel the secret lives hidden in the shadowy underworld of the city. His world, a violent, neon carnival of blackmailers, grafters and gunmen. Brash, relentless, tough as brass knuckles, **Chandler**—the essence of hard-boiled art—a giant 24x36" black & white poster hand-signed by Steranko, $5.00.

Moby Gleep is ...? Anyway, it's big (18x24"), it's in full-color, and it's a brand-new poster by Larry Todd, done as a preliminary showcase for the soon to be released comic book adventures of Moby Gleep. No matter where you look on this outrageous poster there's something bizarre and arresting for the eye—usually with nine eyes staring *right back at you*, not to mention tentacles and a pendulous green moustache. The sea is literally alive, the sky clutches at the sun, and the savage Moby bears down on the creature-cluttered craft while the mad Ahab watches on—and you will too, fascinated and wondering for hours. Truly an epic scale production of an epic scene, **Moby Gleep** is hand-signed and a choice catch for $3.25.

Motorcycle Mama is a black-leather clad Bode broad on her mean machine, now on a giant full-color poster. **Motorcycle Mama** is a brand-new offering from the Vaughn Bode archives, typically sensual, voluptuously stylized, and available now for just $3.25. **Motorcycle Mama** will put a spitfire cam in your engine—or our name ain't Harley!

His name is Elric of Melnibone, an albino warrior-prince. His weapon is a malevolent black rune-sword that drinks the souls of his enemies, be they sorcerer or sultan, woman or wizard-king. Bob Gould has captured the imagery of this fantasy in **The White Wolf**, a special edition, full-color 17x24" poster on heavy stock, limited to 1000 signed and numbered copies for $10.00.

FRITZ LIVES

IN A GREAT NEW BOOK

He's back—in all his fame and glory—in an all-new collection of strips, stories and sketches. This 128-page volume brings together over a dozen Fritz stories, from undergrounds, fanzines and magazines, including several which have never been published before. The very first Fritz tale, in pencil on notepaper, is also included, along with a reflective introduction on the Life and Demise of Fritz the Cat by Robert Crumb. **The Complete Fritz the Cat** is the definitive book on the underground's favorite character, printed on high-quality yellum paper, with brand-new front and back cover paintings in full-color by Crumb, for $6.00.

AT LAST, ALL OF R. CRUMB'S FRITZ THE CAT ADVENTURES IN A BIG, NEW VOLUME— 128 LARGE FORMAT QUALITY PAGES WITH A COLOR COVER!

The future is here!

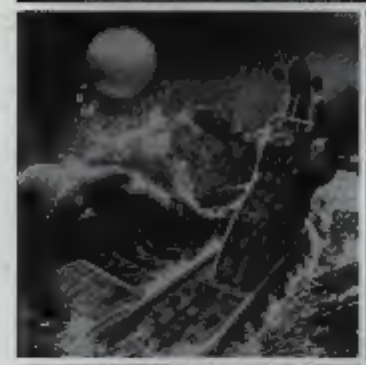
Intergalactic space travel has arrived. Monolithic space ports service the stars and beyond. Galactic cities dot the universe. Time travel is an everyday occurrence. Gleaming battle robots and exotic combat craft patrol the warring cosmos.

In **Mechanismo**, a striking new illustrated book, noted science fiction writer Harry Harrison takes the reader through an incredible journey to a technological tomorrow. **Mechanismo** is written as a future history of the fiercely-fought Decision Wars of the 25th Century, and the awesome developments that resulted; a staggering variety of intergalactic warcraft and weaponry, fascinating robotics, from the invention of the Cyborg to the development of the first Biotic Mandroids, the migration to the space colonies and cities; time machines; human cities; and far-out alien technologies.

With exciting visualizations by science fiction artists such as Giger, Ralph McQuarrie, Chris Achilleos, Brian Lewis and others, Harrison brings the future to today in over 120 pages of text and pictures, *over half of them in color*. Illustrations of bizarre mandorlas, deadly Gausal fighters, and hand-pistol blasters are accompanied by technical schematic drawings, with armaments, drive powers, sensory equipment, with all specifications given in completed detail.

Through its remarkable coupling of words and images, **Mechanismo** manages to thrust the reader into a frightening, yet beautiful future and give him a stunning look at tomorrow—today.

These details alone could keep readers enthralled for hours, pondering the pseudo-scientific possibilities—right or wrong—but, nonetheless wonderous.



MECHANISMO, SCIENCE FICTION AUTHOR HARRY HARRISON'S NEW ILLUSTRATED FUTURE HISTORY OF MEN AND MACHINES, OPENS THE DOORWAY TO A FANTASTIC TOMORROW

NEW!

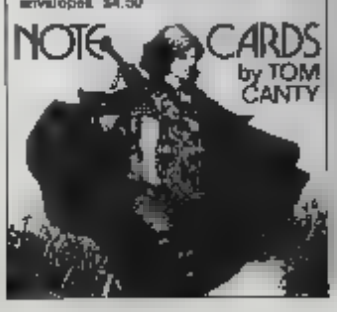
Here are four new posters to delight Star Wars fans everywhere. Each poster is beautifully reproduced in full-color, 22x34" in size, featuring the intriguing Darth Vader, the delicate Princess Leia, Luke Skywalker in action and the irrepressible C-3PO and R2D2. Each poster is $2.00—or take advantage of our SPECIAL OFFER and buy all four for $6.50.

STAR WARS POSTERS

THE SURFER IS BACK WE'VE GOT HIM!

Now Marvel's gleaming rider of the starways is available in a movie-length epic produced by the team that created him. In their first collaboration in years, Stan Lee and Jack Kirby have combined their talents in this titanic 100-page adventure starring the Silver Surfer, the awesome Galactus and a host of fantastic allies and adversaries. Not a reprint book or a collection of old Surfer tales, this new full-color volume is *completely original* and created especially for this edition. Here is the Surfer at the height of his power torn between humanity and his allegiance with the universe trapped between love and survival. Poetic, provocative and powerful. The Silver Surfer is a milestone in Marvel history. Available at $4.95 plus postage. Don't miss it.

Delicate line. Exquisite detail. Elegantly decorative. A once upon a time quality. All this and more describes the art of Tom Canty reproduced on six beautiful Notecards 5x7" in size. For a close friend—or for yourself! With envelopes. $4.50



THE FANTASTIC ART OF BORIS VALLEJO

NOW, TWO GREAT BOOKS BY FANTASY ART'S NEWEST STAR!

If you like fantasy art, and Frazetta turns you on, then you owe it to yourself to discover BORIS VALLEJO. Here are the early books devoted to one of the most talented new artists of the decade. Fantastic Art of Boris Vallejo features 96 pages of warrior women, incredible creatures and powerful barbarians in exotic, often unearthly settings. Over 48 color plates, $7.95. The second book, Boris, is packed with preparatory drawings and closeups of paintings, and includes a dynamic sequence on exactly how a painting is created, from the first sketch to the final brushstroke. It also contains a collector's gallery of never-before-published art with a new full-color cover painting. Boris is available at $5.00 plus .50 postage and handling. Good reading for artists and fans alike.

Enki Bilal is the latest sensation among the new French fantasy artists. This book collects four tales with a weird and bizarre Lovecraftian touch, plus one of the artist's real dream nightmares. Color cover. 48 chilling pages $2.95

Ever dream about running away to the Big City to work as an artist on the staff of a big magazine? This is the story about someone who did.

Me.

Sounds glamorous, I know, but dreams aren't reality, and there are things that art school just doesn't prepare you for. Perhaps a few months at Auschwitz would have been better training. But, I'm getting ahead of myself. Let's pick it up at the point where I had that all sheepskin wrapped around a lifetime of dreams about being an illustrator. I hit the asphalt, applied for a spot at dozens of places I never heard from again, and, as the weeks turned into months, drifted in and out of a handful of jobs that had almost nothing to do with my intended profession.

The word desperation had taken on a new meaning, and I lowered my sights from top art director to lowly paste-up boy. This is where the story really begins, as I spiffed into an old, black leather suit in the reception area of a Park Avenue publishing house. Even before the interview, an unsettling suspicion of things to come began to gnaw at my subconscious—or had I just read too many Steve Ditko comic stories?

The wicked-witch-with-the-bleached-hair receptionist buzzed the interview, and that feeling of dread re trickled through my gonads. I was applying for a position as art assistant—but hadn't I been here months earlier with a portfolio? Wasn't this the publisher that—? An urge came over me to get the hell out of there and spend the afternoon watching bag ladies.

I'd heard of this company before, when they used to publish lurid horror magazines. A well-known publisher of the same kind of magazine, a swindler in his own right, referred to the publisher of this company as a bigger crook than he was. But, like a lemming, I walked into the woods again, proceeded with the interview and was told to start the following day.

The job began by meeting my immediate (who never hit me) larger (a) superior, the associate art director (as opposed to the executive art director—an old, lecherous Perry White type with a yen for one of the assistants—he explained layouts to her as she sat on his lap). The associate art director is best described as a thin, chain-smoking hustler on Paul Lynde with a non-stop temper that vacillated between ninety-second of smiles, then back to obscenity, insults and threats. His eyesight was so bad it was said he once picked up a snake to kill a stick. The page layouts he gave us were more obscure than last year's income tax return. Of course, he'd get angry when you followed his layouts precisely.

The associate art director, whom I'll refer to as Mr. Jitters, was exactly the opposite. If you changed his layouts even a fraction of an inch, he'd hit the roof.

Four hours into my first day, Mr. Jitters told the production manager I should be fired because I was too slow. I said I should be given at least a day or two trial period.

Unfortunately, they kept me on.

The next day, I noticed Mr. Jitters for work. He told me to ask the executive art director, who, in turn, told me to relax since there wasn't anything. When I reported to Mr. Jitters he exploded, "Go find something!" "Hey, I'm not the boss," I protested. Mr. Jitters repeated me for arrogance and again tried to have me fired.

Still, the production manager kept me on.

Before we go on, let me introduce you to the Mansen family of the magazine world: the aforementioned uncle of the industry was the publisher, best described as a human rat. This rodent-with-thumbs, along with his brother Ratt, the associate publisher, are the Leeb and Leopold of periodicals. The Mansen himself studied the ablest on television but kept to his private rathole most of the time, playing with his pistols, punching out staff members (like Mr. Jitters), and juggling his magazine schedule with the aplomb of a blind dam thrower. Brother Rat was right out of a Korkoff movie, the kind of character who was ready to buy your soul the moment you're ready to sign it away in blood (or was in just determined that he'd show up wherever I'd get mugged).

Rathman was the decision maker, determining whether a magazine would sell better than a shark magazine, depending on the feel of the moment. Brother Rat did all the dirty work, like dealing with the staff.

The employees were a much hetter form of life. The art department was mostly down-on-their-luck designers and illustrators like myself who happened upon the job in desperation, and stayed on the grounds that it was better than selling insurance. (In fact one guy, after he was fired, went into selling insurance, or was it selling shoes, I can't remember which).

Special mention must be made of the editor of the rank and science-fiction magazines (who did double-duty on the crime and porno books). Of all the editors, he was closest in ideology to the Rat Brothers—so much so, that I'll refer to him as Junior Rat—not as confused with Ratboy, the son of Rathman, who was also an editor on the rock books.

Ratboy's only resemblance to his father was the predilection they both had for wearing monkey hats. Rathman could often be heard bellowing through all the offices, "Where's my stupid good-for-nothing son?" while Ratboy hid under a desk.

Junior Rat was editor-in-chief of about a dozen magazines, all with the word "rock" somewhere in the title. When I was hired, Mr. Jitters had an assistant around the office to prove his masculinity and was also editor of the science fiction magazines which combined the words, space, star, spectacular, wars, and aliens somewhere in their titles. These were throwaway items mostly, consisting of material rewritten from old sci-fi pulp magazines by the same writers who did them originally.

The real jewel in the bunch was the UFO magazine, Junior Rat's personal pride, with articles like "HAVE MORE LANDED IN YOUR HOME TOWN?," "ARE LEFT-HANDED PEOPLE ALIENS?" or "IS YOUR MOTHER A CLONE?" Each was illustrated with photos of overcast skies with a few scratches toward the upper right (Junior Rat told me, "Don't crop off the scratches—those are the UFOs!"). They are alongside pictures of the staff, identified as "government investigators" and "officials." Junior Rat's editorial policy was: the dumber the idea the better. Every innocuous photo or drawing used had to be labeled "supernatural" or "extraterrestrial."

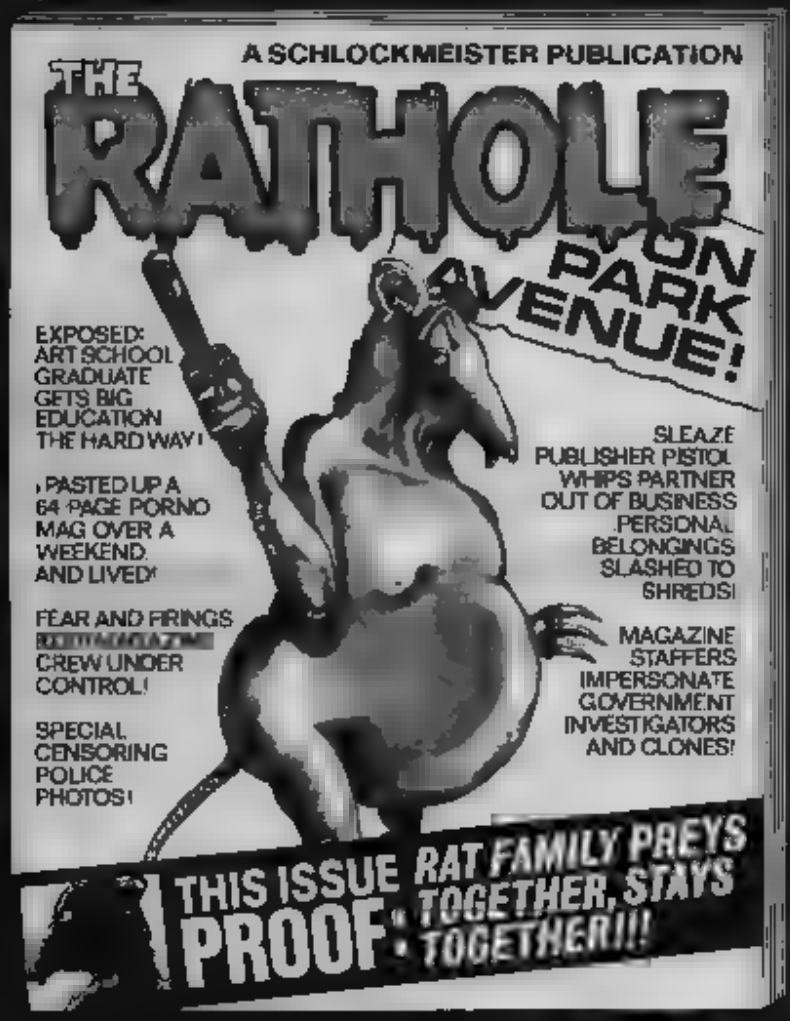
The letter column consisted of material written by Junior Rat himself, purporting to be from readers reporting UFO sightings and paranormal activity. One such letter alluded to a UFO attack in Chester, Illinois, and when someone in Chester complained to the Associated Press, stories of the phony magazine appeared in newspapers nationwide. Delighted by the publicity, negative or not, Rathman and Junior Rat planned on going to Chester to capture this, but for one reason or another never did, sparing Chester a genuine alien invasion.

The editors on the various magazines were as different in personality as their magazines. There were six magazines, edited by a team of self-spoken car enthusiasts who got even worse language therein at them from Mr. Jitters than I did. Mr. Jitters tried to get them fired several times, but no one else would do the job for the same salary.

There were pet magazines, one for dogs, one for cats, one for horses (with an occasional shot of one of the Rat Brothers on a horse—which was doubtlessly devoured afterwards). The editor of these books had the idea he was producing The Washington Post, and was a real slave driver who took no nonsense from anyone, not even Mr. Jitters. He also had the worst-looking magazines of the entire company.

The gun books and ammo books were edited by a jovial fellow who probably felt deep down that he should be doing something better, and probably is by now—he got fired. The gun books were run-of-the-mill items with occasional pictures of Rathman himself posing a rifle at the reader. I always felt that would've made a great trademark for the company, like the little symbols in the left hand corner of comic books. The crime books on the other hand were classic examples of how low you can go in a magazine.

It was difficult enough to put


A SCHLOCKMEISTER PUBLICATION
THE RATHOLE ON PARK AVENUE!
EXPOSED: ART SCHOOL GRADUATE GETS BIG EDUCATION THE HARD WAY!
PASTED UP A 64-PAGE PORNO MAG OVER A WEEKEND AND LIVED!
FEAR AND FRINGS [illegible] CREW UNDER CONTROL!
SPECIAL CENSORING POLICE PHOTOS!
SLEAZE PUBLISHER PISTOL WHIPS PARTNER OUT OF BUSINESS PERSONAL BELONGINGS SLASHED TO SHREDS!
MAGAZINE STAFFERS IMPERSONATE GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATORS AND CLONES!
THIS ISSUE PROOF! RAT FAMILY PREYS TOGETHER, STAYS TOGETHER!!!

THE ONLY BOOK OF ITS KIND EVER WRITTEN!
STERANKO
GRAPHIC NARRATIVE

the PULPS

Fantastic heroes battling incredible villains—that's what the pulps offered to their readers every month. Now, a choice selection of facsimile editions is available featuring the most famous and fearsome heroes and villains, along with outstanding studies of this unique publishing era. These publications are 8 1/2 x 11" in size, with the facsimile editions photographed directly from the original pulps, using the same content and illustrations.

THE SHADOW

GANGDOM'S DOOM is a 64-page study of The Shadow—his weapons, agents, enemies, disguises, hideouts and more. This authoritative and revealing dossier on the Master of Darkness and his career has been gleaned and cataloged in great detail from his 325 pulp adventures. Facts and statistics are combined to give a vivid portrait of The Shadow, his most villainous foes, and the dozens of colorful characters that populated the most memorable hero-pulp series ever created, available for $5.50 plus postage.

THE FLYING SPY

THE FLYING SPY is the definitive record of pulp ace G-8, man enemy scientists and their evil creations. The Flying Spy chronicles all of G-8's 310 fantastic adventures in a massive 160-page gazette that pinpoints every fact and face of the fabulous career—even a chart illustrating every gunshot wound and injury the airborne espionage agent sustained in his struggles with the Reiter, G-8 and the Flying Legionaires, Bippy Wrangler and Skill Hahn, are analyzed and their exploits cataloged, carefully detailing their many cases behind enemy lines,—all for $5.50 plus postage.

THE AVENGER

PULP is a collector's fanzine devoted to the study and enjoyment of the 30s pulps. Featuring its authors, artists and publishers. The issues offered here also feature reprints of the rare and highly collectable Avenger novelettes, written for Chats Detective Magazine in 1942-43. **PULP 4** contains the novelette, Death to the Avenger, along with a study of The Masked Detective Magazine, a Doc Savage index, and a gallery of magnificent covers from Jungle Stories. **PULP 5** features Cache for the Avenger, and an in-depth illustrated analysis of the Secret Agent X series. **PULP 10** continues with a 19,000 word presentation of Vengeance on the Avenger! Interviews with pulp personalities and a revealing article on G-X, the Phantom Fed All three issues of **PULP** are 36-pages in length, available now for $2.00 plus postage each.

WU-FANG

THE MYSTERIOUS WU-FANG is a complete reprint of the Oriental fiend's premier appearance. *The Case of the Six Coffins*. Written by Q-R author Robert J. Hogan Wu-Fang is a Fu-Manchu style supervillain whose demonic plots roar along with breakneck speed and fury. This is the first of Wu-Fang's eight mighty collectable impossible to find stories and is available in a 100-page volume with magnificent illustrations by noted Fu-Manchu artist John Richard Flanagan $5.50 plus postage.

DR. YEN SIN

DR. YEN-SIN brings the yellow peril back for another stab at America's jugular vein in *The Mystery of the Dragon's Shadow*. This Fu-Manchu imitator who lasted a brief three issues set his sights on conquering the west with ancient Devil's arts and a horde of Asian Hellborn and was opposed only by the wits and fists of Michael Tralla—the Man Who Never Slept. Another 100-page reproduction for $5.50 plus postage.

DR. SATAN

DR SATAN collects five rare thrillers from the pages of **Weird Tales**. Summoning up the forces of black magic, hypnosis, drugs and arcane mysticism Dr Satan was one of the first and possibly best pulp villains. This Dr Satan volume affords an excursion into the sinister and the bizarre in a 100-page edition for $5.50 plus postage.

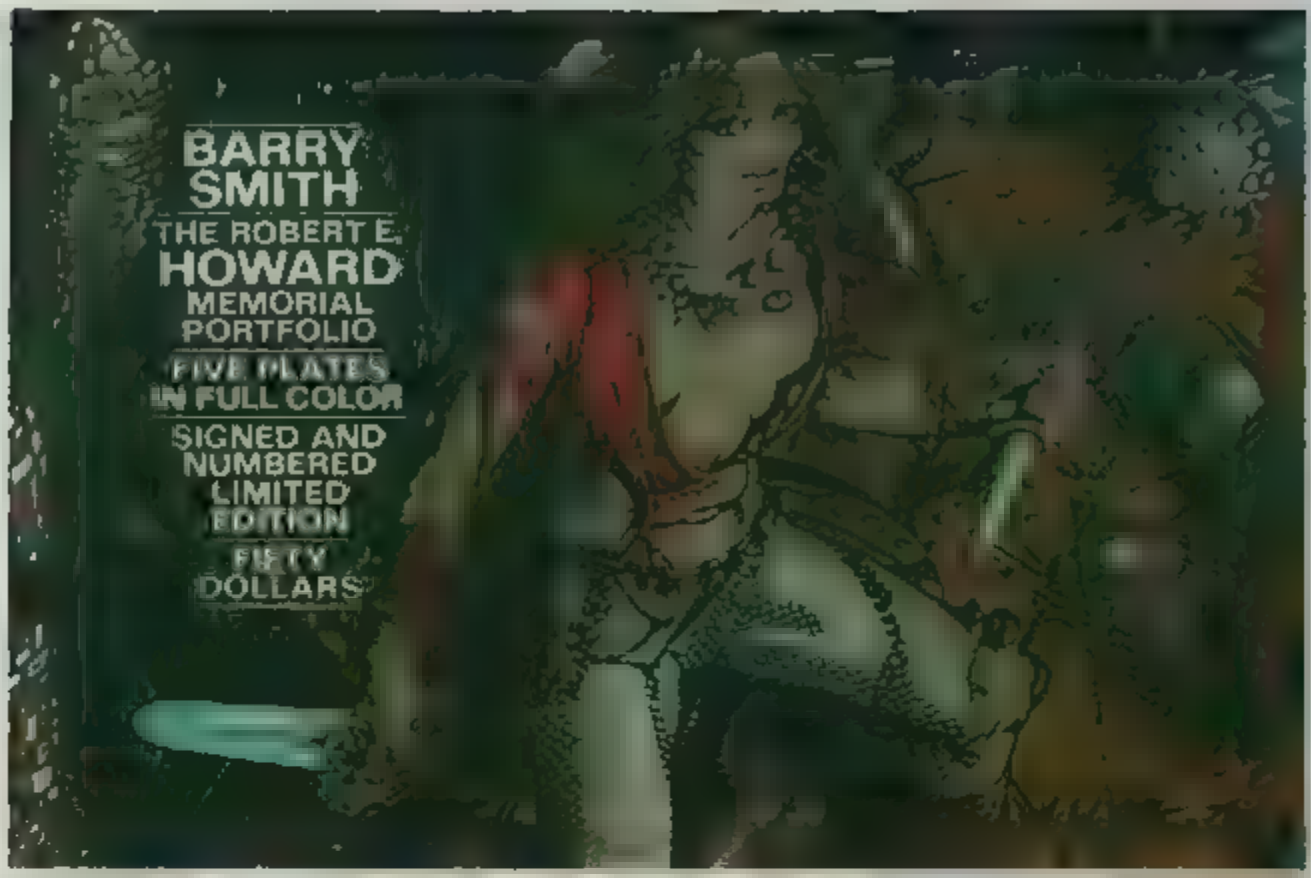
THE OCTOPUS

THE OCTOPUS was by far the most outrageous villain of the pulps. Striking through corrupt medical officials, he holds Manhattan for ransom, and is opposed only by the white-haired Medico of Mercy, Dr Skull. Written by Norvell Page, author of **The Spider** series. The Octopus appeared for only one very rare issue in 1939 and is reprinted in this 100-page volume for $5.50 plus postage.

THE SCORPION

THE SCORPION is the direct descendant of **The Octopus**, only the name has been changed. This is another Norvell Page concoction of the bizarre and the grotesque, pitting Dr Skull against hordes of crazed sanitation workers who kill their families, then throw themselves into the city incinerators. **The Scorpion** is one of the strangest and hardest to find pulps ever and this volume reproduces the entire (and only) novel, *Satan's Incubator* for $5.50 plus postage.

SPECIAL. Order all five of these rare million-pulp reprints for the price of four! Just send $22 plus $1 postage and handling, and you will receive Wu-Fang, Dr. Yen-Sin, Dr Satan, The Octopus and The Scorpion—a savings of over $5.50 off the regular price—*plus getting one book free*. This offer applies only to the books specified in the villain-pulp category, and will only be available while our supply lasts.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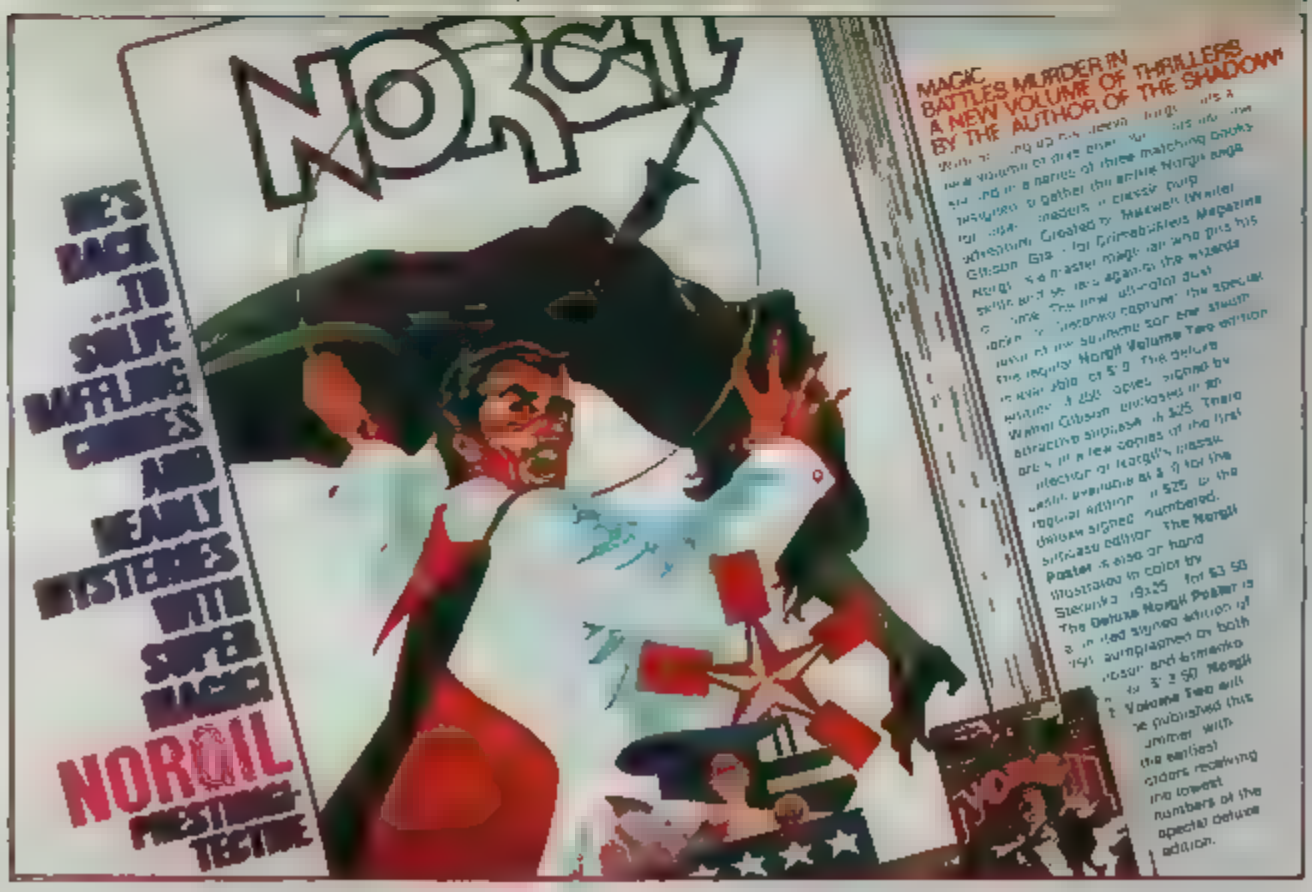
THE ROBERT E. HOWARD MEMORIAL PORTFOLIO
FIVE PLATES IN FULL COLOR
SIGNED AND NUMBERED LIMITED EDITION
FIFTY DOLLARS


NORGIL
HE'S BACK ...TO SOLVE BAFFLING CRIMES AND WEARILY MYSTERIES WITH SUPER MAGIC!
NORGIL
PRESTIGE-TECTIVE
MAGIC BATTLES MURDER IN A NEW VOLUME OF THRILLERS BY THE AUTHOR OF THE SHADOW!

mediascene

FLASH GORDON CONQUERS TELEVISION

BREAKING INTO COMICS PART TWO

THE LAWS OF ACTION

Action
Action in plot!
Action in dialogue!
Action in figure work!

From funny animal adventures to super hero spectaculars, action is the backbone that binds comic melodrama together into a lively, pulsing unit. Whether the subject matter is romance, western or war it's always action that thrusts the reader headlong through the protagonist's many difficulties to the final denouement. Emotional action. Intellectual action. Physical action.

In the medium of comic books, all action is most directly communicated to the viewer in the *attitudes* of the characters, whether the scene is a board meeting on the fiftieth floor of a New York skyscraper or a no-holds-barred brawl in the streets below.

Action can be manipulated by colors on the comic page, by the use of elements graphic devices and directionals, and by the very breakdown of the page itself. All these, however, will be examined and studied in future chapters on comic technique.

This essay concerns itself exclusively with action figures, which, along with style, is the *single most important* aspect in building a reputation. Let me point out first that this is not an anatomy lesson, at least not in the true academic sense. It addresses itself to the practical application of learned anatomy for heightened dramatic effect and maximum visual impact. Just as the most elegant words have no attractiveness unless they are used properly in a sentence, anatomical expertise without intelligent and judicious application will fail to communicate even the tiniest draftsman's intention.

While I'm on the subject of anatomy, I should point out that perfect textbook anatomy is no guarantee to certain success in the comic arts, it might in fact be anathematic in some situations. Take super heroes, for example: the rule is not accuracy of human anatomy but *exploitation* of it- exaggerandizement extravagant exaggeration often to the point of impossibility and beyond.

I confess to being a flagrant offender of that which has been wrought by God and Arnold Schwarzenegger, and proudly join the ranks of the Kirbys, Kanes and Kuberts who have likewise poked their mighty pencils in His eye. Unless memory fails, my most outrageous violation of human anatomy appeared as the centerspread of Captain America #11 in a spectacular bone-jarring leap. Cap came crashing through his townhouse apartment windows several floors above street level to panoramically hurl himself into the path of an escaping assassin. Liked the impact of the double page so much that I decided to embellish the red, white and blue avenger's musculature beyond any of my previous efforts. Subdid myself, piling muscles upon muscles until Cap's thighs were larger than most men's waists then, sat back and waited for three months until the mail came in. Fans loved it, saying it was one of the most exciting scenes that Marvel Comics had ever published. Rest my case- exaggeration of human anatomy.

Though that figure was grotesque by comparison with actual human proportions it nevertheless fulfilled my own personal philosophy of the human figure, the same code that guides my efforts through every artistic endeavor - all in The Heroic Ideal.

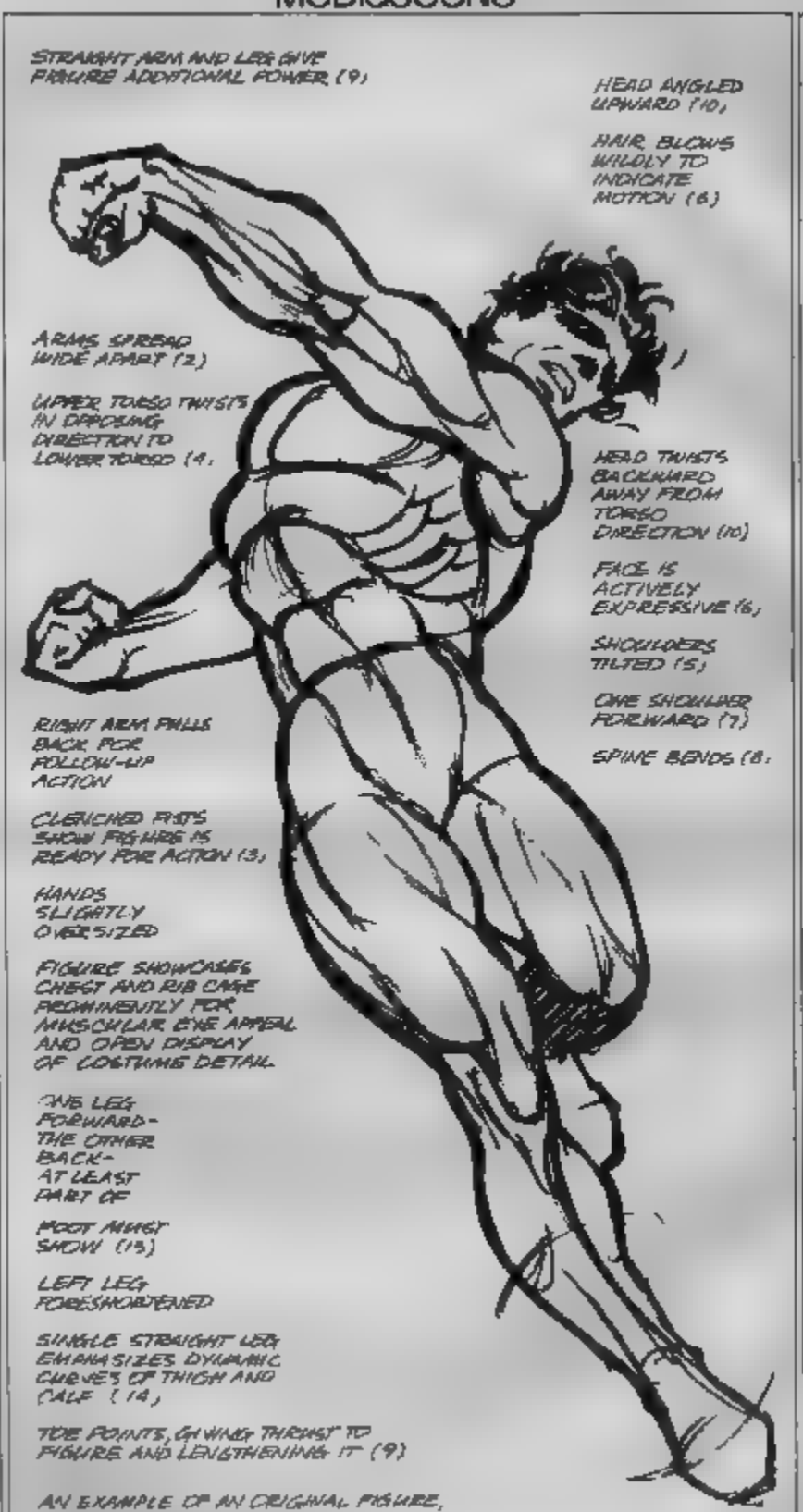
Despite the terminology the phrase refers to my aesthetic attitude of the figure whether it be hero or villain, man or woman. It has been my objective to apply this vision to all my work, especially to major figures.

A good example would be the covers for both volumes of the **History of Comics.** These values are important factors in the construction of my action figures- energy expression and grace.

It is these three elements that give *all* figures their life, and without them even the most brilliant technical virtuosity becomes insipid and uninteresting. Learn them well, because they will ultimately mean the difference between success and failure.

In comic art, energy is perhaps, the most *important* of the three constituents, and, as with the others, it is applied in varying degrees, depending on the character to be illustrated. Energy embodies the aspects of strength vitality stamina, passion and tension. Some characters, mostly frontline heroes and villains, seem to have contained the market on these elements. Supporting characters usually have less, sometimes almost none- and it is in this play of contrasts that the most interesting situations often occur.

Expression is the second value to be considered, and one which is applied almost equally to all characters so they may have compelling and interesting personalities. Expression must be transmitted not only in facial articulation, but in terms of movement and attitude of the body as well. Love, hate, joy, sorrow, guilt, contempt, humility, pride, wonder, cowardice, desire, fear, hope and courage can all be stated fluidly through the careful and calculated use of body language. Hands, for example, can be particularly expressive. By these means the artist may create a naked


STRAIGHT ARM AND LEG GIVE FIGURE ADDITIONAL POWER (9)
HEAD ANGLED UPWARD (10)
HAIR BLOWS WILDLY TO INDICATE MOTION (6)
ARMS SPREAD WIDE APART (2)
UPPER TORSO TWISTS IN OPPOSING DIRECTION TO LOWER TORSO (4)
HEAD TWISTS BACKWARD AWAY FROM TORSO DIRECTION (10)
FACE IS ACTIVELY EXPRESSIVE (6)
SHOULDERS TILTED (5)
ONE SHOULDER FORWARD (7)
SPINE BENDS (8)
RIGHT ARM PULLS BACK FOR FOLLOW-UP ACTION
CLENCHED FISTS SHOW FIGURE IS READY FOR ACTION (3)
HANDS SLIGHTLY OVERSIZED
FIGURE SHOWCASES CHEST AND RIB CAGE PROMINENTLY FOR MUSCULAR EYE APPEAL AND OPEN DISPLAY OF COSTUME DETAIL
ONE LEG FORWARD- THE OTHER BACK- AT LEAST PART OF
FOOT MUST SHOW (15)
LEFT LEG FORESHORTENED
SINGLE STRAIGHT LEG EMPHASIZES DYNAMIC CURVES OF THIGH AND CALF (14)
TOE POINTS, GIVING THRUST TO FIGURE AND LENGTHENING IT (9)
AN EXAMPLE OF AN ORIGINAL FIGURE, CREATED BY UTILIZING THE LAWS OF ACTION. THE NUMBER FOLLOWING EACH NOTE REFERS TO THE RULE WHICH HAS BEEN APPLIED.

personality for the character he is attempting to portray on the two-dimensional surface.

The third value is a much more personal requirement than the previous two, dealing as it does with a private ideology. During my career as an artist I have come to see the human figure as an object of grace and *dignity*, a quality I have hoped to capture in every line and brushstroke of my work. It is this philosophy, I believe, that separates my art from that of most of my contemporaries and gives it a special recognition factor. Art should, after all, say something worthwhile, perhaps even new to those who take the time and trouble to view it. The grace and dignity of human endurance (even in comic art) is part of my message to the world.

The artists with the strongest personal philosophies of the human figure are the ones whose figure concepts are the most easily recognizable and the most unique. Jack Kirby comes to mind with his predilection for power. His massive machine-like figures are visual manifestations of that philosophy. Hogarth endows his characters with exceptional mobility and spirit. Joe Kubert's figures reflect this aspect of stability, a kind of indestructible quality somehow linked with destiny, while Steve Ditko's approach to figure work is a study in repressed power. Neal Adams shows us an underlying defiance in the attitudes of his characters. Hal Foster brought an orderly philosophical concept to his work, while Alex Raymond tells us about the beauty of the human figure in every panel.

Doubtlessly, most artists express their philosophy on an *intuitive* level rather than a conscious one. Either way seems equally valid although I personally prefer to be cognizant of my reasons for doing anything. A little introspective thought can't hurt and could perhaps help clarify an emerging philosophy whether it's one of the above, or less in other areas such as change, violence, weakness, destruction, elegance or a host of other human characteristics.

I am by no means insisting that the budding artist should adopt my ideas for his own, although I must sanction the possibility I've found it to be an *unquestionably* successful approach—and if it works for me, it can work for anyone. I recommend using this philosophy as a basis until an individual can fashion one of his own. Be warned, however, that being different just for the sake of being different is a totally worthless concept. Every approach must be justifiable to the intelligent artist.

It could take years to develop a fitting and successful philosophy about figure work as until that time, these guidelines will serve to direct the artist along a path that offers naturalness and taste without sacrificing freedom.

Energy Expression, Grace.

Now let's get down to the specifics. Just after I began my comic career I took time to assess and analyze their basic structure and substance. It was at that point that I developed a system—a set of rules called the Laws of Action—that aided me in creating a series of outstanding action figures.

The Laws of Action are separated into two groups: primary and secondary. The seven primary rules can be applied to all figures: standing, running, jumping, flying, crouching or falling, including figures that have a limited range of action, such as those in talk scenes. The secondary Laws of Action generally relate to more animated figures, those engaged in violent movement.

1) **FEET APART**—the beginning of an action figure. Legs are the human body's longest extremities and their positions set up the figure's attitude—whether a few inches apart or a few feet, depending on the movement called for. Be sure to use both. Incidentally, because a consistent high action figure will bore readers, contrast between action and non-action is far more effective. Figures with feet placed close together have a defenseless, submissive appearance, while feet spread gives the figure the illusion of aggression and activity. A quick look at the sports pages in the newspapers will make the point perfectly.

2) **ARMS SPREAD**—the same rule applies to the arms, but while the spread legs give a base to the figure, the arms suggest more direct action. In addition, the arms may be moved into an infinite variety of positions and are capable of bending at the wrist, elbow and the shoulder with considerably more flexibility and expression than the legs.

3) **EXPRESSIVE HANDS**—further embellish the position of the arms and are capable of great dramatic suggestion, second only to the face itself. This is the reason they are drawn slightly larger in the comics. They can convey the idea of grief, anger, need, hostility, defeat and a host of other emotions. The full depth of their expression should be explored in every figure. I have found that one hand open and one closed is a good action formula.

4) **THE TORSO TWISTS IN OPPOSING DIRECTIONS**—to create a remarkable tension in the figure. Though more subtle (and more difficult) than arm and leg positions, the action device of aiming the chest and hip planes in different directions is nonetheless effective. Twisting the spine is the body's third major movement, one which suggests a reverse or dual action can take place. It can shift the form in otherwise static figure into an elegantly graceful one, especially in flying action.

5) **TILTED SHOULDERS**—adds yet another possible variation to the upper torso. Raising either arm does not necessarily result in the framework of the shoulder structure tilting, but the action is enhanced and emphasized when drawn this way because the entire body becomes part of the

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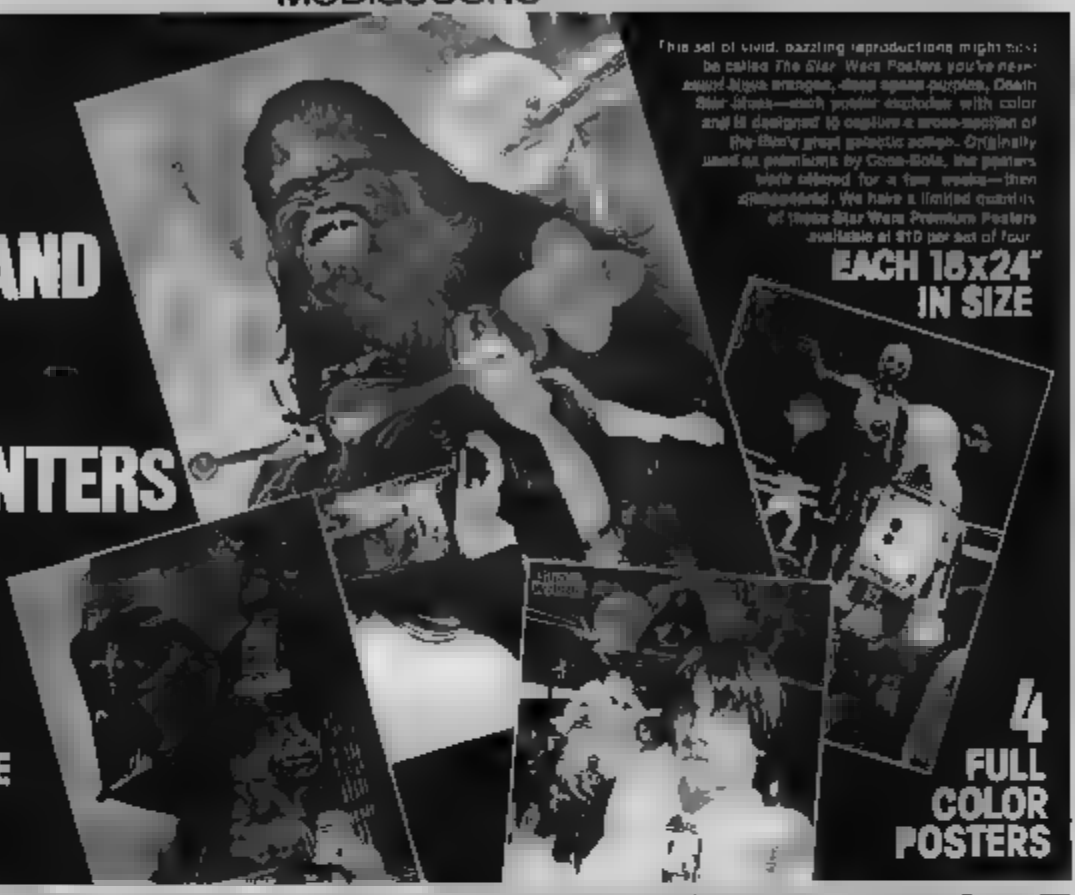

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as when the figure is leaning forward on a raised surface—tilted shoulders can result in a powerful posturing

5) **FACIAL EXPRESSION**—is the *most important* focal area of the human figure. The face should always tell the story an aspect far too often ignored by today's artists. Even the best craftsmen illustrate entire stories that are heavy with dialogue scenes without ever drawing the characters with their mouths open. Unbelievable, but sadly true. Try talking with your mouth closed for several hours. Learn the lesson well, then be certain never to make the mistake while illustrating a story. The face is the artist's most valuable and expressive device, capable of reflecting the most subtle emotions or the most violent passions. The artist that turns every face into a genuine *character* study will soon find himself head and shoulders above his peers.

6) **ONE SHOULDER FORWARD** —and the other *pulled back* is a perfect solution for getting action into non-action figures—for example: those with one arm extended in a gesture. This may also be handled by the *point* of view the artist chooses in illustrating the figure. In other words the figure is drawn with one of its shoulders closest to the viewer. Either way the rule turns an inert motionless figure into one of restrained action—and this is often enough to keep the story alive and moving.

7) **SPINAL CURVE** —either *forward* or back is one of the most dynamic and beautiful postures the figure can take. Thrown forward the torso upper can be hulking and aggressive, thrust backward it can be noble and triumphant in crouching, running and leaping figures. The spinal curve becomes an indispensible factor in the action it is also perfectly compatible with primary Laws 4 and 5. the twisted torso and tilted shoulders. Skillful handling of all three in a *combined posturing* can produce extraordinarily effective and original figures.

8) **ARM OR LEG IN LINE WITH THE TORSO**—produces an unusual directional effect and a striking *illusion of power* as the limb continues instead of breaking up, thrusting lines of the torso. The rule applies quite easily to flying figures.

9) **HEAD MOVEMENT**—can often make or break an otherwise remarkable action figure. Because of the extreme flexibility of the neck, the head may be tilted forward or backward, or turned to either side. In structuring the figure, however, the artist must be certain that a considerable portion of the face be seen especially in major figure work. Remember that whatever position the head takes, it must be *expressive* and *complimentary* to the rest of the figure.

10) **HEAD CUTS THE SHOULDER LINE**—In all action figures where the torso tilts forward, avoiding a stiff stovepipe appearance. Because foreshortening occurs, the neck is seen *minimally* in this position especially in front views of the figure. The more we see of the top of the shoulders, the lower the head drops. *Below* the shoulder line.

11) **RAISED HEELS**—gives the legs (either or both) additional action and keeps the figure from having a stationary flat-footed look. Remember that when the body's weight is on the balls of the feet instead of the heels, the figure is thrown *slightly forward*. Pointing the toes also gives the figure a graceful look.

12) **ONE FOOT BEHIND THE OTHER**—whether just a few inches or an even wider stretch, endows the figure with a *progressive forward motion*. The space covered between the feet and the forward tilt of the torso are in direct relationship to the speed with which the figure is advancing. Generally the forward foot is balanced by the opposite arm as it thrusts ahead.

13) **ONE LEG STRAIGHT ONE BENT**—is a common but practical rule in the construction of action figures. Properly handled, the effect is often more graceful without losing tension than a similar figure with both legs bent. The bent leg can be in front or behind the other leg, depending on the motion of the body. Generally prefer to show the top surfaces of both feet in this position and in most others. Some artists expose the bottom of the foot when the legs bends, and, although it can be effective in some situations, is less than graceful in its presentation.

All the Laws of Action may be combined in an *infinite* variety of positions. Though it may seem impossible at this point, there still remains a limitless number of striking original figures to be created as Mogarth, Kirby, Buscema, Smith, Colan, Adams, Kane and a host of other discriminating artists have proven time after time.

The first step in reaching this point, however, is simply being able to construct and conceive good action figures. Like every artistic achievement this ability can only be mastered through *constant application and practice*. To that end I've developed a disciplined exercise that calls for the creation of directional figures, a series of studies which describe similar angles and positions on a single work sheet.

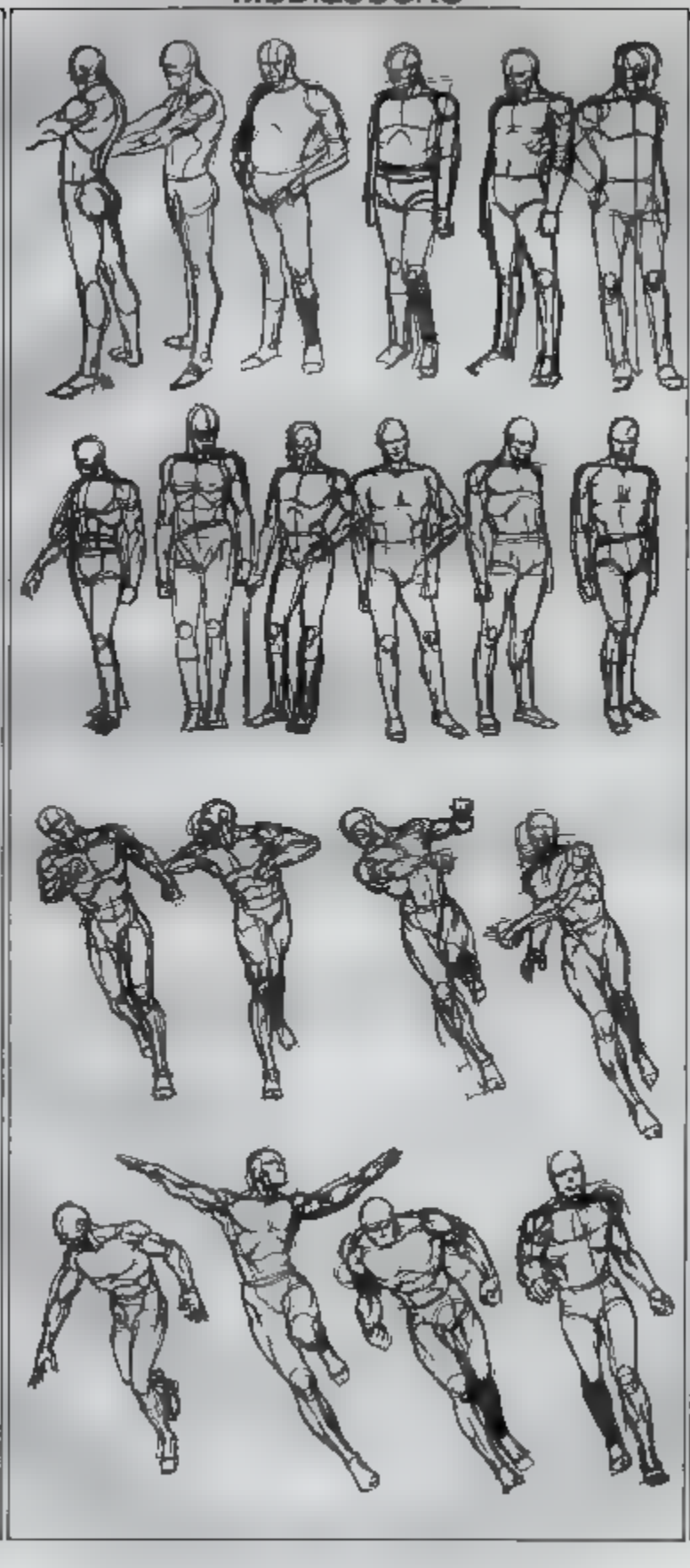
By modifying the exercise slightly (sometimes frontal figures, back views, side or three-quarter views), a great range of experimentation can be produced. This system allows the artist to make an *instant* comparison of his studies figure to the point where he is able to ascertain and develop his own personal philosophy about the human form.

These are The Laws of *Action* and combined with *The Hands* bear a certain talent for drawing and a knowledge of anatomy there is no reason why with sufficient practice any artist couldn't add his name to those listed a few paragraphs earlier.

Now it's up to you.

Pick up that pencil—and draw!

STERANKO



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FLASH GORDON CONQUERS TELEVISION

PART ONE

September 1 1939

The peace of Poland are split apart by the screaming sirens of the bat shaped Nazi Stuka bombers plummeting their out of the sun to rain destruction on an unsuspecting city. Before the streets of Warsaw are shattered buildings become rubble and panic stricken civilians race to escape the thunderous pounding from unleashed by the attacking

World War II has begun in England and nearly stunned in Eastern Europe and though the United States will not see the skies until Pearl Harbor at least one American already finds

somehow inexorably involved in the genesis of the most devastating of all global wars. His name is Flash Gordon.

Square jawed with steel blue eyes and golden hair he has the strong muscular physique that goes with his athletic reputation as a world renowned polo player. He also has official ties with the United States government and even though his country is not yet formally involved Flash Gordon is facing a task that will soon make him a prime target as Hitler's and the Earth's first interplanetary conflict

The complete case history of this fantastic War of the Worlds which occurred in the early 1940s has never been declassified and the complete behind the scenes story will be electrifying! It seemed only living rooms across the country late in 1979 **Flash Gordon, The Greatest Adventure of All** will take the lid off one of the most fantastic events in the scorched pages of history

The latest chronicle of Flash Gordon will become an animated science fantasy epic on American television produced by Filmation Studios the same company that has, through the years brought to life the adventures of Captain Marvel Big Batman Tarzan and Superman among others. But unlike the usual juvenile limited budget approach taken with these Saturday morning projects Flash Gordon will be produced for the adult prime time audience— the same audience that originally witnessed the birth of the original Alex Raymond illustrated newspaper strip and returned week after week to watch the Universal produced serials made by Universal with Buster Crabbe in the late 30s and 40s

The budget for the new Flash Gordon production is still a

somewhat sensitive because publicity in the key world and world-wide distribution plans must be consolidated. A recent issue of Variety approximated the initial price of this adult animated cartoon at $2.5 million but sources at Filmation predict that the final costs will soar considerably higher.

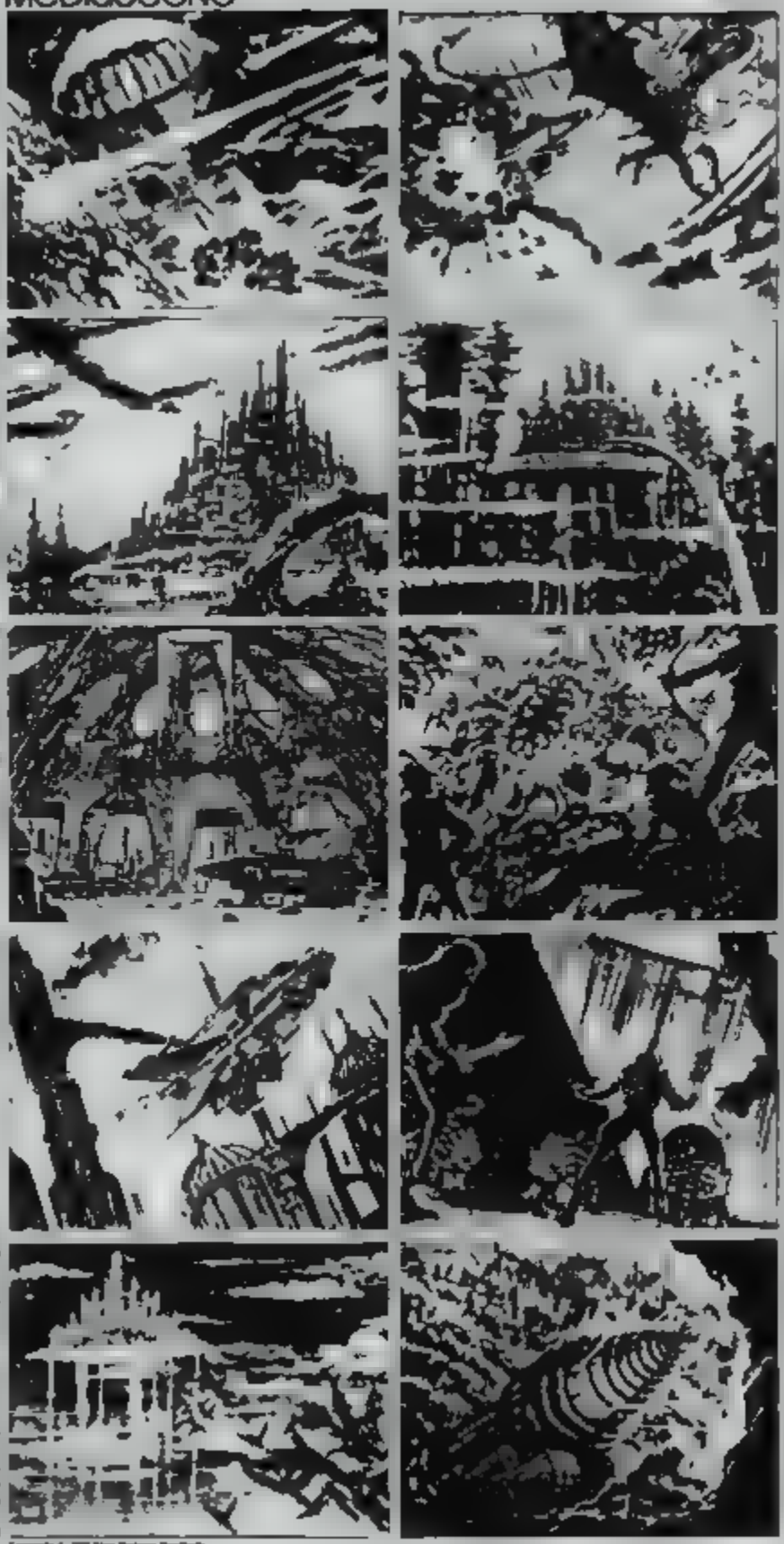
The script for **Flash Gordon: The Greatest Adventure of All** was written by Sam Peeples a long time aficionado of the original Hollywood serials who has scripted various TV projects over the years including a shot at a Star Trek episode or a

Sam Peeples goal to retain all the fantastic elements of the original Raymond comic strip storyline on Mongo and at the same time update the material so that it would realistically relate to the concerns of the action adventure world that it has produced a full length teleplay which the majority of the 11 to 14 year most infamous human monsters Adolf Hitler with one of the most insidious fiendish deceivers of heroic action titles the Merciless Obviously it will be a toss up as to which of these arch villains will emerge as the Incomparable Emperor of Evil

Using the original Alex Raymond opening as a starting point Peeples plunge right into Flash Gordon to bail out of a disabled Ford tri-motor plane during a freak meteor shower bearing the terrified but beautiful Dale Arden in his muscular arms. On the ground Flash and Dale are met a slightly more sane Dr. Hans Zarkov who believes that he has tracked down the real threat to Earth's safety in the far reaches of outer space rather than in cavernous halls of the Reichstag. Zarkov has even gone so far as to work on interplanetary rocket to prove his theory and soon the three intrepid Earthlings are hurtling through the void

Their destination is Mongo a strange new planetary sphere which has mysteriously entered the periphery of our solar system

This sequence which took a mere twelve panels to unfold in the first Flash Gordon Sunday page has been expanded primarily as a means to introduce and establish the characters of Flash Dale and Zarkov early in the show so that viewers can gain with them in exploring the mystery of extraterrestrial terrain, adventure, conflict and



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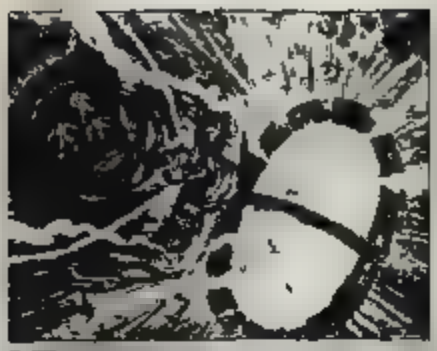
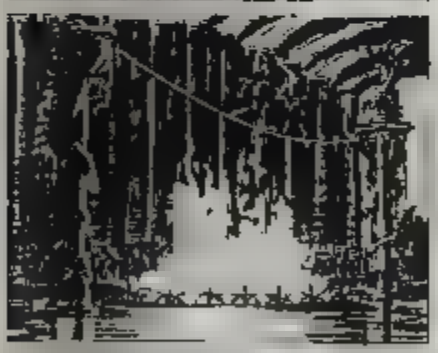
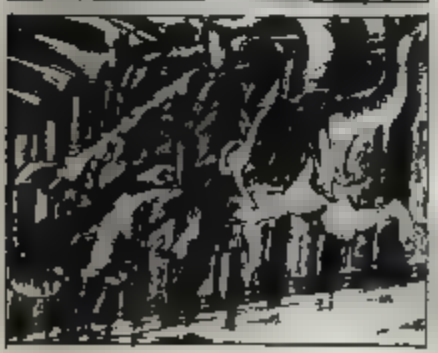






intrigue.

On Mongo, Flash and his terran friends encounter numerous characters and creations adapted directly from the comic strip or though inspired by the original Raymond concepts invented for the television film by Peoples and the Filmation staff.

There is the futuristic palace-city of Ming the Merciless ruler of Mongo and self-proclaimed Emperor of the Universe. It is here that Flash eventually ignites for his life in the inevitable Tournaments of Death.

In the floating city of the winged Hawk Men, Flash battles and then befriends the boisterous King Vultan. Among the scenes set in Vultan's sequence will be a spectacular air battle between Ming's imperial space-fleet and the legions of the Hawk Men astride flying dragonlike creatures.

Prince Barin, rightful ruler of Mongo and leader of a Robin Hood-type band in the forest kingdom of Arboria, also befriends Flash in the struggle to unseat the usurper Ming. Among the terrors of Arboria are such bizarre hazards as man-killing constrictor plants.

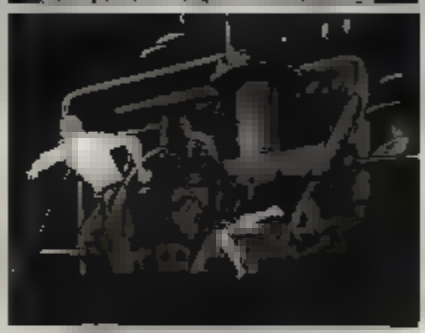
Yet another inhabitant of Mongo to become an ally of Flash is Prince Thun of the Lion Men. At one point Flash, Thun and Barin are forced to team-up in a battle against a ravaging pack of horned sabre-tooth Tigrons. Mongolian hybrids of both tiger and lions.

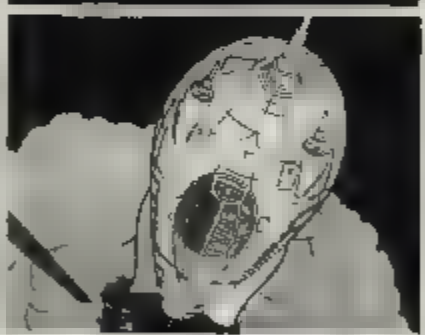
And just to keep things moving at a lightning pace there will also be menaces such as the Tusk, a monstrous two-horned saurian. Mole People who bore through the planet's surface with a tank-like tunneling machine, Beast-Men who worship an enormous idol-statue of Ming and pursue Flash, Dale and Zarkov to the brink of a gaping chasm and last but not least a stunning Lizard Woman complete with a scaled reptilian tail.

The core of the new Flash Gordon plot however lies with Ming's insidious pact with Nazi Germany's Hitler and its effect up on the future of Earth itself. At a crucial point in the story's development, Flash learns that Ming has formed an alliance with Hitler and is really the major power behind the man with the moustache in this light whatever plans the Nazis have on conquering the world take on an apocalyptic universal aspect.

It is Ming's technological advancement which Hitler desires to exploit in his tyrannical dreams, a fact revealed in a scene during which the gloating Ming proudly shows Zarkov a chilling scene on a massive view-screen—Germans hard at work on a weapon of Mongolian design known on Earth as the V-2 rocket. The situation is crystalized with sparkling clarity of the Allied nations and Earth itself are to be saved, Ming must be defeated.

Flash Gordon, like any first rate space-war story constantly maintains a balance between the personal and global conflicts at hand. Spectacle is certainly a major consideration in the segments detailing the effects of Mongo's proximity to Earth. Massive catastrophies strike in the form of earthquakes, storms, floods, volcanic eruptions and gravitational forces running rampant. Against this backdrop, the holocaust inflicted by Nazi Germany unfolds, all designed by Ming to bring the Earth to the point of surrender of complete destruction.





The inevitable confrontation between Flash and Ming is not only a satisfying and necessary resolution to their mutual enmity but also the true climax to all the film's conflicts, encompassed on a microcosmic scale. They meet in a head-on confrontation high on a light-rope, leaping, thrusting and parrying with flaming swords. The outcome of their contest is reflected by the fact that the Allies did win the second world war and Mongo has become the stuff of legends. But the exact manner in which the matter was decided has never before been revealed, and it remains for the film to present the real story.

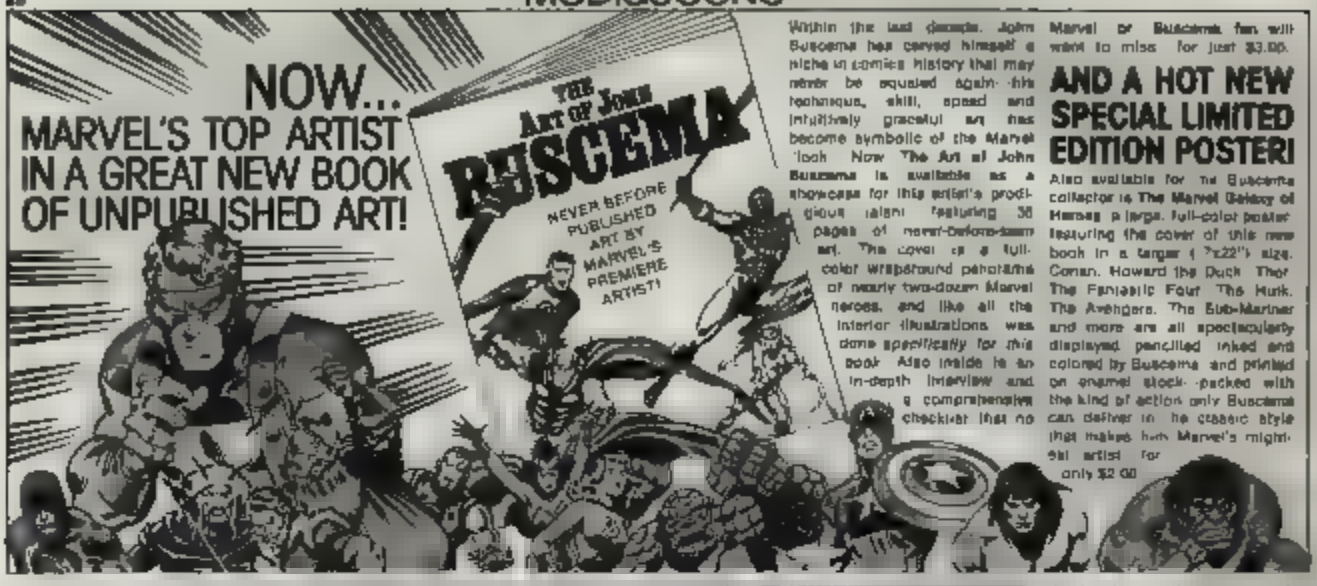
Flash Gordon, The Greatest Adventure of All is the most ambitious project Filmation Studios has ever undertaken. Executive producers Lou Scheimer and Norm Prescott are optimistic and excited about the show's progress. Much of the filming is being done in full animation, a form which has long since disappeared from Saturday morning television's financial ability to support.

A major factor behind **Flash Gordon**'s ambitious production plans is that Italian movie producer Dino DeLaurentiis has acquired the right to release the show as a major theatrical feature overseas. The triumphs this anticipated and generated have made big-budget production possible. In fact, vitally necessary for the more sophisticated audience which will be paying money instead of seeing it for free on TV. DeLaurentiis, for his part, is planning to use this animated project as a preview and promotion piece for his own live action Flash Gordon epic which is already beginning production, but will, probably be delayed by special effects considerations.

The original **Flash Gordon** and **Buck Rogers** serials were major inspirations behind the creation of the current trend of **Star Wars** films. Now in a twist of logic only a science-fiction fan could truly appreciate, Lucas Skywalker has made it possible for his original inspirational prototype to return in dignity and the kind of majestic splendor only money can provide. It's a living mobius strip on a cosmic Technicolor scale. And while Alex Raymond would undoubtedly be surprised to see the money and interest being invested in his wildly imaginative and fantastically impractical 40-year old creation, he would also undoubtedly be quite pleased—and glued to the screen to see how it all turns out, just like the rest of us. ●

Don Glut

FLASH
GORDON
PART TWO


NOW...
MARVEL'S TOP ARTIST
IN A GREAT NEW BOOK
OF UNPUBLISHED ART!
THE ART OF JOHN BUSCEMA
NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED ART BY MARVEL'S PREMIERE ARTIST!

Within the last decade, John Buscema has carved himself a niche in comics history that may never be equaled again. His technique, skill, speed and intuitively graceful art has become symbolic of the Marvel look. Now **The Art of John Buscema** is available as a showcase for this artist's prodigious talent featuring 36 pages of never-before-seen art. The cover is a full-color wraparound panorama of nearly two-dozen Marvel heroes, and like all the interior illustrations was done *specifically* for this book. Also inside is an in-depth interview and a comprehensive checklist that no Marvel or Buscema fan will want to miss. For just $3.95.

AND A HOT NEW SPECIAL LIMITED EDITION POSTER!

Also available for the Buscema collector is **The Marvel Galaxy of Heroes** a large, full-color poster featuring the cover of this new book in a larger (22"x22") size. Conan, Howard the Duck, Thor, The Fantastic Four, The Hulk, The Avengers, The Sub-Mariner and more are all spectacularly displayed, penciled, inked and colored by Buscema and printed on enamel stock - packed with the kind of action only Buscema can deliver in the classic style that makes him Marvel's mightiest artist! For only $2.00.

Here's your last chance to grab *Sally*. The fourth and last book featuring the wild misadventures of Wally Wood's blonde bombshell, **Sally Forth** is ready now. From King Kong to Tarzan to women's liberis. Sally and her calamitous crew of misfits spoof their way through another 36-page, giant 10x12" collector's edition. If you've laughed through the first three volumes of **Sally** you won't want to miss her fantastic final appearance. Available now at $4.00. **Sally** 2 and 3 are still in stock at the same price.

Hot Stuff—that's what you'll find between the pages of this professional quality fantasy comics magazine. Not just another fanzine, **Hot Stuff** is an unusual underground comic, printed on high-quality offset paper with full-color covers by top professionals. **Hot Stuff** 4 features comics and stories by Toth, Morrow and Bob Hall, with a color cover by Ken Barr. Issue 5 is a never-before-seen issue featuring Bolton and Tim Kirk, with a different cover by Corben. **Hot Stuff** 6 is literally packed with art by Mike Kaluta, Mitch Leilich, Tim Boxell and more. Issue 7 is a showcase for all-new art and stories by Mike Kaluta, Ernie Colon, Sonny Trinidad and others. **Hot Stuff** 8 presents the unfinished talents of Neal Adams, Ken Barr, Ernie Colon and Mitch Leilich. Every issue is a dynamic display of the most interesting comic experiments—making **Hot Stuff** the magazine where the fans and the pros get together for really unexpected results. Don't miss your issue.

ELRIC

...in an ultra-rare collector's item of a limited time only. This full color **Elric** Print was done several years ago in conjunction with a special hardbound book by Bob Gould. 300 were printed but less than half were released. This print is circular, six inches in diameter and comes in a custom-made plastic windowed mailer, signed by the artist and sealed in plastic. These are the last copies of this unusual collectors item while they last available now for our $10.00.

BORIS VALLEJO

Fantastic—that's the only word that can properly describe the unique appeal of **The Art of Boris Vallejo**—an artist with larger than-life heroes, statuesque, beautiful women, and exotic creatures and backgrounds for which no models could ever exist. In less than six years Boris has overwhelmed the paperback field with magnificent depictions of science-fiction, fantasy and romance, illustrating Tarzan, Gor and Conan novels among many others. Now 40 of Boris' most dynamic and impressive paintings are reproduced in a brand-new 96-page volume, all in full-color with a brand-new cover painting. **The Fantastic Art of Boris Vallejo** is a collectors dream, for just $7.95.

HOLY REUNION!

HEROES, HEROINES AND VILLAINS ROAST EACH OTHER IN A PAIR OF TV SPECIALS

Green Lantern—who can wear his ring to watch TV!!

The Flash—whose flying feet carry him faster than light!

Dr. Fate—the master of mystic science!

Black Canary—the beautiful blonde with the world-shaking Hawkwhistle—fighting evil on legs of might!

—and more!

No, this isn't a story from Justice League of America—not an episode of the Super Friends cartoon show, but from two live action specials to be shown on NBC television.

Two hour-long specials featuring DC comics characters, villains and heroes, as well as a few original adventurers, have been produced by Hanna-Barbera Productions, Inc., for eventual airing on NBC-TV. The two are named collectively Legends of the Superheroes; the first is the Superheroes Roast and features Ed McMahon as the host. The second, The Challenge, is an action comedy pitting the DC villains against eight heroes managed by the same secretary.

"More than 400 people auditioned for the parts," says casting director Lee Guenther, who with director—producer William Conrad and associate producer Joel Stein, was faced with the task of filling the colorful roles. "We got people from all walks of life. One 68-year-old lady who admitted she never acted before, lifted her bangs and tried out for Aunt Minerva. But she couldn't act."

The costume designer, Warden Wells, spent two weeks researching the outfits long familiar to readers of DC comics. He produced about 40 costumes (worth approximately $60,000) with the help of his regular seven man crew of cutters, seamstresses, stamstresses and the like.

The stunt coordinator for the show was Buddy Joe Hooker.

Hooker referred to throughout the recent Burt Reynolds film, Hooper, for which he was also stunt coordinator. One of Hollywood's best-known and most-respected stunt men, Hooker arranged for the stunt doubles for the actors playing the heroes and villains. Burt Ward, returning as Robin, did most of his own stunts, since he's the proud possessor of a black belt in Karate, "I'll kill him as a stunt man any day," says Hooker.

The Challenge is in a style very similar to the Batman TV show of a dozen years ago—high on comedy laughs and comically-overdone heroes. In fact, Adam West, as well as Ward, recreate their roles from that show. With the same straight-faced Gentle Ben Batman, and the same colorfully "camp" interpretations from Robin.

This time the dynamite duo are joined by several other DC heroes, including Captain Marvel (Garrett Craig), Green Lantern (Howard Murphy), the Huntress (Barbara Joyce), Black Canary (Danuta), The Flash (Rod Haase) and Hawkman (Bill Nuckels, who plays Marvel's Hulk in the Universal City Tour show).

Opposing the lineup of heroes is an impressive group of villains, led by Mordru the Sorcerer (Dabe Bell of Dead End Jame), the group includes Swamp (Howard Morris), Solomon Grundy (Mickey Morton), Hawkman (Bill Nuckels), Captain Marvel (Garrett Craig), Green Lantern (Howard Murphy), Blackhawk (Charlie Callas), Superboy (A'Lisha Brevard), Batman (Adam West), Green Lantern (Howard Murphy), Flash (Rod Haase), Wonder Woman (Lynda Carter), Batgirl (Yvonne Craig), Robin (Burt Ward), Metal Men (William Schallert), The Huntress (Barbara Joyce) and Black Canary (Danuta).

PHOTO CREDITS: Solomon Grundy (Mickey Morton), Hawkman (Bill Nuckels), Captain Marvel (Garrett Craig), Green Lantern (Howard Murphy), Blackhawk (Charlie Callas), Superboy (A'Lisha Brevard), Batman (Adam West), Green Lantern (Howard Murphy), Flash (Rod Haase), Wonder Woman (Lynda Carter), Batgirl (Yvonne Craig), Robin (Burt Ward), Metal Men (William Schallert), The Huntress (Barbara Joyce) and Black Canary (Danuta).

(Solomon Grundy), Wizard (Jeff Altman), Shazam (Charlie Callas), Batgirl (A'Lisha Brevard) and The Riddler (Frank Gorshin, who played the same part on the Batman series).

The plot is reminiscent of one of Hanna-Barbera's popular Saturday morning TV shows, only this is done live. The villains have decided to conquer the arch-enemies, the heroes, with ultimate finality. Brains has devised a Doomsday Machine which when activated will destroy all living things on Earth most especially heroes.

To prepare themselves and a waiting for the world to end, the villains use the rare necessary for the machine to be activated to give heroes a series of deadly clues, devised by the Riddler and designed to lead them to the deadly device—but not in time to save the world. And as the TV special has a built-in suspense angle—the countdown to doom.

The first clue is sent to the heroes as they are about to honor Red Cyclone, the Retired Man (William Schallert), who has a habit of falling asleep

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mid-heat. The various do-gooders tear off in numerous directions in their inimitable styles to try to save the world. A running gag has each of the heroes in turn disrupt the picnic of a romantic couple.

The villains use a nearby service station as a suitable location to slow down the heroes, and they give Solomon Grundy a magic hat which causes him to look like a normal human being ("Oh! Just like **Herman Cain Wall**," says the swamp-born creature) as long as he keeps it on his head. Naturally since this is a comedy at some point during Grundy's encounters with each of the heroes he has occasion to doff his hat, revealing himself.

In turn, Batman and Robin, Black Canary and Hawkman encounter Grundy. Captain Marvel is forced to rescue the latter two from Grundy's clutches. In the meantime, the Weather Wizard disguised as a used car salesman has sold the gullible Duo a gimmicked motorcycle.

Green Lantern encounters Sinestro, disguised as a gypsy fortune teller, and the ring-wielders have a power ring duel. The Flash zooms into a fake Japanese restaurant, where Mordru and Giganta nail his boots to the floor. Captain Marvel's split personality is analyzed by the Riddler disguised as Sigmund Freud.

In the guise of "Ranger Bob," Dr. Sivana delays the Huntress by threatening to arrest her for hunting without a license. He traps her in a net, but she eventually frees herself.

The story returns occasionally to Batman and Robin, who are careening around the countryside in the side-car which has become detached from the

motorcycle. Another already commentary is provided by a woman in a phone booth near the service station who describes the comings and goings of the various costumed characters to a puzzled friend on the other end of the line.

All proceedings are being watched from the villains' secret island hideout by Mordru, who keeps track of the action on his magical viewing screen.

Finally as the heroes get free of the various menaces and delaying devices grouping to attack the villains in the

[illegible] be telecast.

The Challenge is set to be preceded in most areas by **The Superheroine Roast**. Both shows were written by Mike Marmber and Peter Spivey.

[illegible] villains in **The Challenge**, the romp cars disguised as a little boy selling lemonade he convinces each of the heroes to sample his wares—which contains a drug that removes their powers.

The ending is no surprise, but to give it away wouldn't be sporting. Watch your TV listings to discover when the special will

washes him away himself. Next into the Roastcave is Hawkman's mother who explains the troubles of raising a Hawkboy.

Ghanja Man (Brad Sanders) billed as the very first black superhero which will surprise Marvel's Power Man and DC's Black Lightning, berates the heroes, saying their galaxy-spanning adventures don't compare to the trials and tribulations of growing up in a big-city ghetto.

Dr. Sivana quizzes the heroes, and the women come out ahead. The romance between villainess Giganta (a gorilla turned into a woman) and he Atom DC's shrinking hero is examined by gossip columnist Rhoda Rooter.

Solomon Grundy gives host McMahon a hard time throughout the show whenever Ed mentions a swamp, and Batman is embarrassed when he learns that Robin has totalled the Batmobile.

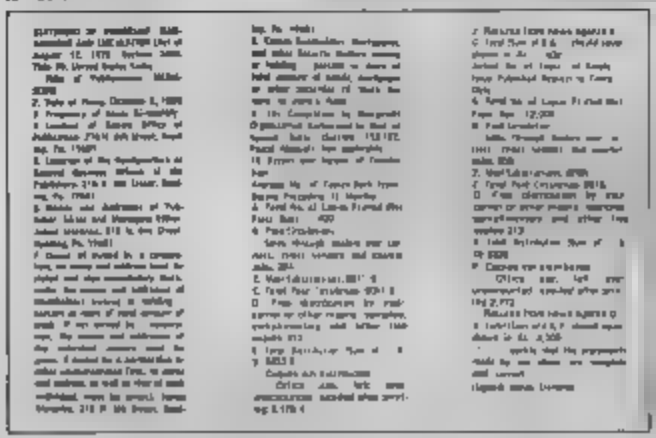
Finally true fear is experienced by the male heroes when the [illegible] villain shows up. It's Aunt Minerva, and she's (shudder) looking for a new husband.

Because of the humorous approach of the shows it is doubtful that production executive Louis M. "Deke" Heyward and executive producer Joseph Barbera expect any series will be spun off from these relatively low-budget specials soon to be seen on NBC. But you never can tell—there's never been a live-action show we know of that has featured more comic-book favorites than these two.

Bill Warren

THE WILDEST FANTASY BOOK EVER PUBLISHED!

Hard to believe, until you've actually seen the work of CHRIS ACHILLEOS. England's foremost fantasy artist. This hefty volume reproduces almost 90 examples of the artist's most spectacular paintings, most of which were originally done as British paperback covers for the savage sorcerous adventures of Howard, Moorcock and Burroughs. Achilleos' barbarians, demons, wizards, monsters and amazons are all in the heroic tradition of FRANK FRAZETTA but, unlike the Frazetta books, EVERY PAGE IS IN EXPLOSIVE FULL COLOR and features THREE TIMES AS MUCH MATERIAL. Fantastic rebel assassins, exotic warrior women, giant armor-clad champions, unworldly creatures, all never-before-seen in America. $7.95.



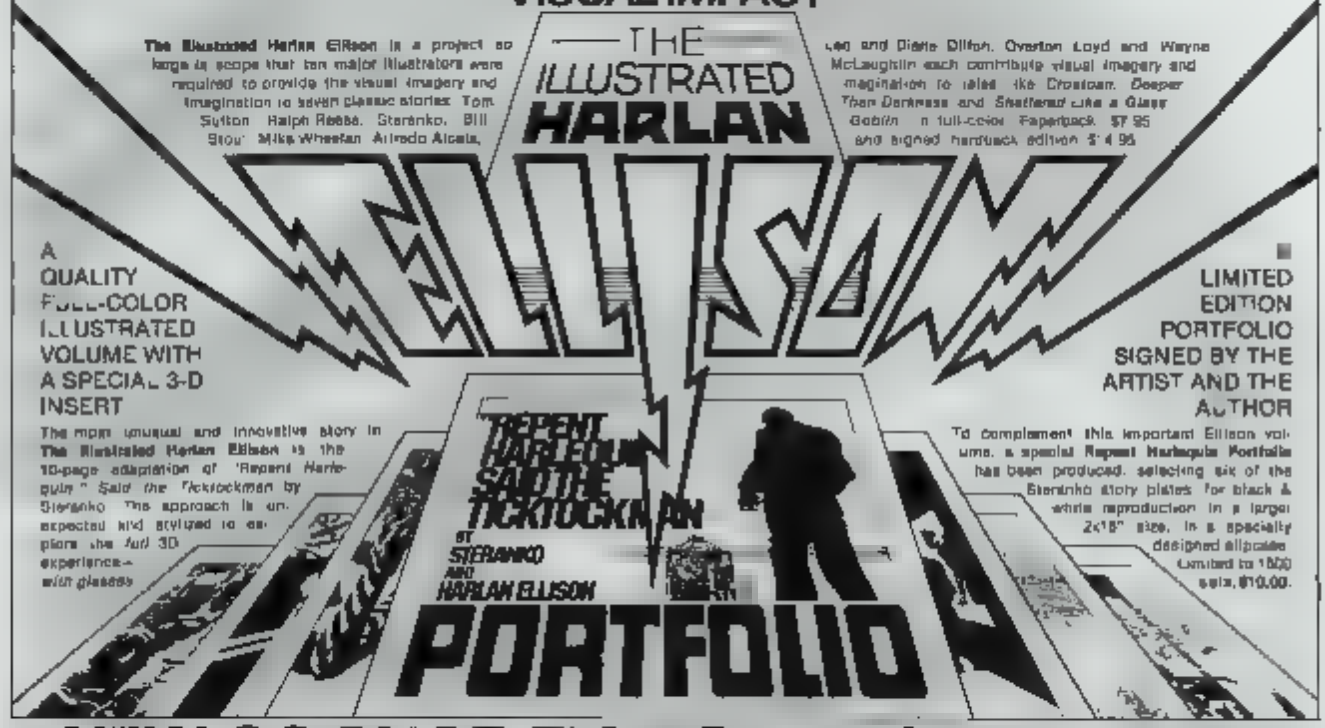
TWO NEW ELECTRIFYING PACKAGES OF UNIQUE VISUAL IMPACT

The Illustrated Harlan Ellison is a project so large in scope that ten major illustrators were required to provide the visual imagery and imagination to seven classic stories: Tom Sutton, Ralph Reese, Steranko, Bill Stout, Mike Wheeler, Alfredo Alcala, Leo and Diane Dillon, Overton Loyd and Wayne McLaughlin each contribute visual imagery and imagination to tales like *Croatoan*, *Deeper Than Darkness* and *Shattered Like a Glass Goblin*. A full-color Paperback $7.95 and signed hardback edition $14.95

THE ILLUSTRATED HARLAN ELLISON

A QUALITY FULL-COLOR ILLUSTRATED VOLUME WITH A SPECIAL 3-D INSERT

The most unusual and innovative story in **The Illustrated Harlan Ellison** is the 10-page adaptation of "Repent Harlequin" Said the Ticktockman by Steranko. The approach is unexpected and stylized to explore the full 3D experience—*with glasses*.



LIMITED EDITION PORTFOLIO SIGNED BY THE ARTIST AND THE AUTHOR

To complement this important Ellison volume, a special **Repent Harlequin Portfolio** has been produced, selecting six of the Steranko story plates for black & white reproduction in a larger 2x15" size, in a specially designed slipcase. Limited to 1500 sets, $10.00.

6 NEW SCIENCE FICTION BLOCKBUSTERS

Ted Sturgeon's **More Than Human** has become a science-fiction classic since it first appeared over 25 years ago. Now this unforgettable love has been adapted into graphic novel-form by two of comics top talents, writer Doug Moench and fantasy illustrator Alex Nino. **More Than Human** is the sensitive story of a small child born ahead of its evolutionary time, searching for acceptance brought to life in emotionally charged full-color on high-quality enamel paper providing an elegant showcase of art and writing, paperbound for $8.95

MORE THAN HUMAN

Rocketing out of the past and streaking into the future **Mechanisms** is a highly-illustrated volume of science fiction technology from the time of **The Time Machine** to the latest NASA hardware designs. Author Harry Harrison has collected and cataloged *over 200 pages worth* of *fantastic space gadgetry* blueprints, fantasy graphics and photos, including *a few special exotic gizmos* from Barbarella's personal collection. **Mechanisms** is a 9½"x12" in size, brimming with 75 color and 50 black and white illustrations with running commentary and criticism by Harrison as well. Full of insightful analyses and a wealth of unknown facts and features for science-fiction aficionados. **Mechanisms** is a lively visual observation of futuristic automation for $7.95

An epic concept and an epic collaboration. **Empire** brings together two cult talents in the publishing field to create an all-new science-fiction graphic novel of cosmic warfare and heroic adventure. Samuel Delaney, the universally popular science-fiction author and Howard Chaykin, artist for Star Wars and hundreds of comic stories, have collaborated on this 72-page full-color volume which features a unique grid format that integrates the art and pictures into a cohesive story-telling format. **Empire** is available in a paperbound edition for $9.95. There is also a special

hardcover deluxe edition, signed and numbered by both Chaykin and Delaney, for $24.95. **Empire** is scheduled for publication in October by Baronet Press.

EMPIRE

ALIEN ENCOUNTERS

In all your wildest, farthest-out fantasies nothing can compare with the grandest collection of sci-fi heroes, villains and creations brought together in **Alien Creatures**. A definitive illustrated study of the growth of science fiction, from H. G. Wells to Star Wars. **Alien Creatures** assembles bizarre, unworldly faces from films, comics and TV in a

80-page visual extravaganza, with 32 pages in full-color. Kissin' Flash Gordon, Mr. Spock, Chewbacca and literally hundreds of others are all waiting to fill you in on an incredible odyssey to the farthest reaches of the galaxy and back to discover a universe of beings weird and wonderful, awesome and astonishing. **Alien Creatures** contains everything you ever wanted to know about Earth's galactic visitors—and much more you never even dreamed of! Ici just $6.95

COMIXSCENE

Jack Kirby hopes the whole mess won't be his epitaph as many other occasions. But this runs the importance of the actions has in what he is now doing.

According to Jim Shooter Kirby expressed an interest in drawing some comic books upon completing his commitments to the Fantastic Four cartoon show. Arrangements were discussed which would have employed Jack's artistic talents only and Mark Wolfman (plot & two-part Fantastic Four script to Lofficier). Other sources state that Thor and The Avengers Hulk were also being prepared for a Kirby takeover as soon as a new contract could be hammered out. A cautious wave of enthusiasm rippled through the fandom at the news.

Then something went wrong.

Several Marvel writers have declared that it was the sore nuggs for new agreement which has already caused a lot of trouble in the comics industry that caused Jack to balk and return the FF scripts to Wolfman with a letter of apology for letting him down. If this is the case Jack is the first major comic creator to take an unequivocal stance on the matter.

Apparently he was not so much concerned about losing the rights to one book at a time as all comic contracts stipulate. But the work made for hire agreement assumes all rights for all work ever produced by Marvel past and future which would permanently bind his hands in all further negotiations and could possibly affect the Silver Surfer volume which has sold out to 80 000 ops every print run and sets Kirby as a co-copyright holder with Stan.

When questioned about the matter Jack would make no comment about the specific nature of the situation. It is not necessarily a matter of being he replied. Just prefer not to be held down - want to be free to experiment and develop new ideas. Conditions simply do not favour a Marvel contract right now even though I'll always be working in comics one way or another.

In simply not signing a contract or working for Marvel right now Kirby is ignoring the time honoured method for communicating.

In response to an inquiry about the possibility of producing a special graphic novel Kirby's response was that he was too busy right now but that is the direction pointed out in his New Gods and Forever People series at DC. This concept using three or four books to deliver a massive epic is one he and other artists and writers have picked up on since. And the 80 page Silver Surfer book that was a runaway success for Simon & Schuster was a step in that direction.

As for the future Jack give me [illegible] make a

refuses to sign the agreement has been paid with some irony that over the rubber stamped cover of rights on the back Marvel subsequently re-assigned the book to John Byrne who is starting from scratch using the same painted watercolour technique making [illegible] pages worthless.

A original art is Marvel's private property and only reproduction rights have been sold so Marvel does not own it. It reproduces them any time it desires. The artist has received a great deal of fuss and [illegible] the pages and Marvel regard the matter as [illegible] Nevertheless after they submitted the additional stipulation long after the work began at their

artist says is 80-pages long 30 pages per book leaving giant [illegible] full-colour process [illegible] and ink to [illegible] on the [illegible] paper. Unsolving Galactic The remaining 8 pages per book will be [illegible] with fantasy maps and [illegible] background information in the series.

The Rolling Stones Super Special is also out to appear soon involving them in super-heroic adventures but not quite as [illegible] especially as the KISS trips.

Howard the Duck will be entering the Marvel universe mix-up at the same time. Incredible reports to tell that a new Sal Mineo, Gene Colan and Tom Palmer is be handling [illegible] mainly black & white

Will Doog have to return the money? The artwork? Part of the money? Will Shaw be allowed to print the art himself seeing as how Marvel has not copyrighted and it is too good to have [illegible]?

Or will this just be another expensive legal tie-up as the Kirby OZ book and the 150 000 [illegible] of Planet of the Apes [illegible] have not been sure no one would see a long distance phone call was Charlton reason about [illegible] to George Tuska's inter-[illegible] of his face in the comic [illegible]?

When the Buscema rendition of Wonderful Finally does appear it will be split between Marvel Super Specials 1 and 2 appearing in April and May. The

book supplemented with pin-ups by Vs Mayerik and goody features such as Shakespeare to Cleopatra.

Six other regular comic titles have also been cancelled due to a rising level. The Invaders and Nova making room for remakes of The Sub-Mariner and Jack Kirby's Machine Man. Due to the unpaid royalties A Kirby won't be working on the new version of Machine Man however but another King and Marvel favorite a la Steve Ditko.

Both Steve and the new artist Mark Hoffman agree that some changes will have to be made for the King Machine Man is just too powerful with all his little self-repairing bugs and penchants as they are looking

news/views/reviews from the world of comics

him to extension arms and flying, scuttling the rest of the gimmicks in favor of old-fashioned ingenuity. MM will also take a job as an insurance investigator, so that he can observe the foibles of humanity. Like Pinocchio and Adam Link, Machine Man still wants to be a human being, only it's not his nose that grows longer in each story.

Two new experimental format titles will be added to the Marvel line-up of comics with the spring appearance of **King Conan** (the adventures of a middle-age Conan as a king) and **Thor the Mighty** (set roughly 5000 years ago in mythologic time). Both books will be 52-pages long for 50-cents, written and edited by Roy Thomas, and designed to explore the possibilities of the larger format with some of Marvel's top-selling characters.

Dracula may be a dead vampire as far as Marv Wolfman is concerned, but his bloody spirit will linger on thanks to the take-over of the series by Michael Fleisher, whose *Spectre* stories for DC were some of the most sadistic comics to appear since the gory '40s. No artist has been chosen yet, and Marv has not given up hopes of continuing his carefully crafted version of the character in a black & white magazine where he may occasionally be released with Colan and Palmer.

Marvel is finally getting underway with their pseudo-**Heavy Metal** magazine, although everything is still on an unofficial basis, pending approval from the Cadence board of directors. The working title for now is **Nova**, even though the PBS-TV series prohibits the actual use of that title on the newsstands (the same problem was faced when **Panthoosa** wanted to branch into sci-fi territory and had to settle for the nondescript **Omni**).

The new magazine will be 84 or more pages, monthly, with virtually cover to cover color. Fantasy is the main theme, and superheroes are *not* invited. Comic format stories and illustrated short stories are the primary targets, with prose sci, but handled tastefully. Authors like Ellison, Bradbury and Vonnegut have been contacted for stories, and Rick Marschall recently spent three weeks touring Europe scouting artistic talent. Familiar and unfamiliar names should be appearing, including Druillet, Hugo Pratt, Nordillo, Sanjulian and Enrich. Very few American comic artists will qualify for the book, primarily because the hard-edged comics ink line is not being encouraged. Marschall is planning to get in touch with artists such as Barry Windsor-Smith, Jeff Jones and Steranko, primarily because they have extended themselves beyond comics' rigid panel borders in the direction Marvel would like to pursue.

And finally, a Marvel Memo from "The Man" for October: "Writers will no longer use bold lettering in word balloons for emphasis in comic books. It looks too juvenile."

At DC, everyone is currently enjoying the calm before the storm of activity anticipated with the release of **Superman—The Movie**. As the premiere draws closer the list of Superman endorsed and franchised products grows longer, causing the Man of Steel to enjoy the largest merchandising saturation in comics' history. It almost makes one wonder if the old National Comics identification bullet, featuring "Superman" more prominently than the company name in the upper left of every comic cover, was not discarded prematurely—to most people, DC is a type of electrical current or fruit of an exotic sexual lifestyle.

At any rate, **Superman—The Movie** will dictate the events surrounding Superman and his satellite comic book world for the next year or so in many subtle and unusual ways. The exact extent will depend on box-office grosses and the extent of Supermania in the marketplace.

One thing to be remembered, and thankful for, is that **Superman—The Movie** is being played straight partly as an artistic judgement, and partly as a merchandising investment protection. The most obvious parallel lies in the James Bond series, which also started out straight and rode an incredible merchandising wave to the bank on millions of spin-off products. The recent trend of the series to go for cheap tricks has all but killed any merchandising considerations—people laugh at jokes but seldom want to own anything connected with them. **Star Wars** also handled its superheroic subject with a dignified, straight face and came up a winner. Whoever consciously decided to take the original camp-ridden script and temper the melodrama with serious intent deserves recognition. Now if only they would stop promoting this action-adventure spectacle as a Brando film like **On the Waterfront** or **The Godfather**.

When Superman—The Movie does appear, a number of unexpected items will also show up—and not show-up. Most disappointing to nostalgia fans is the fact that the scenes with Noel Neill (TV's Lois Lane) and Kirk Alyn (the serial's Superman) as Lois' parents have been cut from the final print.

Kirk, Noel unkindest cut of all

Superman, like 96 per-cent of all films, must fit into an approximately two-hour long time slot—even a half-hour longer would result in theaters not being able to squeeze in an extra viewing at the end of the day, resulting in a loss at the ticket-counter.

Also related to this is the fact that the **Superman** movie tabloid being published by DC will contain many scenes and production stills that are not in the regular press release package or even the film itself. This book, incidentally, has been printed already, and will not appear on sale in the theaters, so as to avoid conflict with the Warner program book. Nobody is worried about this loss of

COMIXSCENE

revenue, however, because advance orders have almost guaranteed a successful sale of 750,000 copies, at $2.50 each—numbers DC hasn't seen for almost a decade.

Despite many previously announced press releases, there will not be an immediate tie-in release of a novelization of the **Superman** movie, even though the book has already been written. The same situation prevails at DC over an adaptation by Gerry Conway for a giant tabloid comic version. The entire problem revolves around the contract, reportedly having to do with Mario Puzo's credit line in the film, which gives him original story credit but not screenplay. It's a little strange for DC not to be allowed to adapt a story about a character they licensed to their parent company, Warners, but comics is not a game business, and Elliott Maggin's unrelated Superman novel will have to bear the burden of the film's success for the time being. Another decision involving credits has also stirred some rumbling as the film itself—by simply going into alphabetical order, Margot Kidder has dropped from fourth billing to eighth. Superman himself will still be playing third fiddle to a Marlon Brando hologram and a grazed, wig-wearing Gene Hackman.

Superman film just in time for birthday present

Superman—The Movie opens, incidentally, with a shot of an old Superman comic book, and the film starts on the inside pages.

In the real world of comic books, **Superman** will celebrate his 40th anniversary in issue 338 of his own title with a special 25-page story in which Len Wein will enlarge the bottle city of Kandor. Exactly where he will locate this thriving mini-metropolis is still a question—it can't be Earth exactly, and suggestions are coming in for all kinds of solutions, including the artificial reconstruction of Krypton. Meanwhile, response to Len's plans for bringing back the old Daily Planet newspaper angle in **Superman** has been overwhelmingly positive—so much so that Len wishes he had thought of it in the first place. It was Cary Bates who came up with the idea, and Wein reaped the glory simply because he was doing **Superman**, which most uninitiated readers will identify with the character most strongly.

Jose Luis Garcia-Lopez has decided to take a two-month vacation in his native Argentina, so several of his books will be passed around to others. Dick Dillin and Frank McLaughlin will fill-in on an issue of **World's Finest**, and Deadman will probably simply skip an issue of **Detective** after the 25-page story originally intended for **Showcase**. The only firm commitment Garcia-Lopez will make during this hiatus is to do a **Jonah Hex** story, simply because he likes the character.

The return-to-the-past syndrome is spreading to include more and more DC heroes as old villians claw their way back from doom, death and destruction. A 50s villain named the Kriteman will turn up in Len Wein's **Batman** series as a modern tie-in to the sport of hang-gliding. Then the Riddler will puzzle once again, followed by a Batman and Robin story featuring a 40s foe, Crazyquilt.

Meanwhile, DC seems to be stabilizing at the levels set by Warners last summer, with little sensationally good or bad rocking the boat. For the time being they are concentrating on housekeeping, such as shipping Mike Grell to again ink **Warlord** as soon as he is caught up on the new monthly schedule. The coming summer high-sales period and Superman movie activity are strong temptations to accelerate the production schedule and expand the line-up. But the indications are that '79 will be a relatively cool and quiet year for DC Comics, unless someone makes the decision to run with the ball in the next few months.

In the underground field, Jack Katz has just completed book nine of **The First Kingdom** in time for Christmas release. The story continues to develop both the characters and science-fiction concepts on an epic scale, but the source of primary satisfaction lies in Katz' progressive development artistically. The pages are more expansive and not as cluttered with panels, a storytelling awareness that matches the massive plot with compatible graphics. Also, Jack is applying new principles in design, including spotting black areas to focus interest on specific scenes and characters, all of which makes **The First Kingdom** easier to read and understand.

Book 10 of **The First Kingdom**, which will break next summer, is a particularly important chapter in the series because "everything before is revealed to be merely an introduction for the wonders to come." Tentatively titled *The Keepers of Life*, Book 10 focuses on the chief medical officer, who serves as an oracle for the unfolding events. Filled with symbolism, the story centers on the discovery of a massive bridge in space, guarded by robot nurturers, who are the lessons between those "who are alive and those who will be."

This will also be a milestone issue in which Fara and Tundran finally get together to start a new breed of mankind. Book 10 is one of four key issues in which important pivotal events occur, the rest being books 16, 20 and 24.

And don't forget, by this time next year, Jack will be starting book 12, halfway through with the series, on the inevitable quest to book 24.

Next issue, **MEDIASCENE** will follow-up on the continuing adventures of Jack Kirby and the comics, as well as previews of new projects for the summer, and full-color magazines from Rick Marschall's special features department.

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